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The Perils of Respectability

The Perils of Respectability

And Other Studies in Christian Life and Service for Reconstruction Days

By the Rt. Rev.
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To

Mr. Haley Fiske

who for many years has stood to me in loco parentis

I dedicate this book

because in his life I find the practical working of many of the principles for which it pleads, and because I know that his charity is large enough to forgive its defects and to allow for all partial and unworthy presentations of the truths it seeks to express

Preface

THESE studies in Christian life and service have all been preached as sermons. When you who have bought the book discover that, you will possibly feel yourselves cheated. You would never have made the purchase had you not been misled by the title!

Yet why should you not read a book of sermons with at least as much interest as you would give to a volume of essays? Surely, a preacher sometimes has thoughts worth thinking over in the study as well as listening to in church. If only you can be induced to read, you may be able to do with these sermons what congregations ought to be doing with all sermons—you can preach them over again to yourselves and make them apply to your own tasks and problems.

I print these sermons just because they *are* sermons. If they are not provocative of much thought, it will be for some other reason than because they were pulpit utterances. The fault will be in themselves, not

in their homiletical form. I print them because others have said that they are homely and practical enough to encourage you to take the truths they teach and think them through in relation to your own lives. The real preaching of the sermon must always be done by the hearer, not merely by the preacher. Sermons fail because they are not taken outside the four walls of the church. Alone you must brood over them, ponder them, weigh them, and ask what they mean for you. Try to do that with these studies; make them yours, not mine, and you will forgive in them their faults and deficiencies. C. F.

Syracuse, N. Y.

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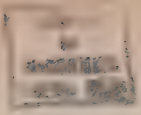

Studies in Christian Life and Service

I

THE PERILS OF RESPECTABILITY

ST. LUKE 7:41–48: *There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.*

THE parable sprang out of the criticism of Christ made by a man who had invited Him to be his guest. Simon had heard of Jesus and desired to see what manner of man He was. He wanted

an opportunity to test Christ, to learn something of His teaching, to make up his mind about this Master who was winning men to Himself; so he invited Christ to be his guest at a semi-public dinner—invited Him with the rather ungracious purpose of closely observing all His actions. It was a chance to watch and listen, a chance to decide just what He would do about this movement which was creating such a stir in Jerusalem.

During the feast a woman of the city entered the room. She was a sinful woman; but oh! she was so sick of her sin. Probably she had struggled to do better, but the task was well-nigh hopeless, with no help from a pitiless world. Then she had seen and heard Christ and He had opened for her a door of hope. Again and again she had listened to Him, with quick-beating heart. Had she spoken with Him? And had He given her help and counsel? We do not know. But, at any rate, whether she heard in private conversation or as she hung on the outskirts of the crowd while He talked in public about the grace He came to give, what she heard meant for her pardon and peace, new strength and a new life.

In the joy of this new life she sought her Deliverer and—careless of the crowd, with

no self-consciousness, anxious only to show her gratitude—she broke her precious box of ointment, anointed the Master's feet, washed them with her tears, wiped them with her hair.

It was a scene to touch any heart. There could be no mistaking the meaning of her action. Any one with the faintest spiritual discernment could have read her whole story and learned the significance of this new chapter in it. Yet Simon stood by untouched. He was cold, critical, disapproving. Nothing within him leaped out in sympathy or understanding. He was plainly annoyed and disgusted with the unseemliness of such a public "scene." And quickly he made up his mind about Christ. Why, the man lacked ordinary discernment. He could not be a prophet, or He would have known what sort of woman this was and would have had nothing to do with her.

"And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have something to say unto thee. And he said, Master, say on." And then Jesus "turned to the woman"—looked at Simon and then down at the woman—and the parable followed, with its moral of the largeness of pardon and blessing for those who love much.

Let us forget the woman now and think about Simon. Forget her? Of course we cannot—she is with us yet. She and others like her are the problem of the ages. How shall they be recovered? What shall we do with them when they can be rescued and brought back to normal, decent living? Some of us have tried to solve the problem and have grown rather hopeless, we have had so many discouragements and setbacks and so little warm, helpful Christian sympathy in our endeavours. (Read a little story of Edna Ferber's, *The Woman Who Tried to be Good*, if you want to know why we grow hopeless.)

But we are thinking now of Simon. Put the problem of the woman away, if you can, and think about the man. What was the matter with his soul that he saw nothing in the scene to stir his sympathy and make his eyes glisten with at least a suspicion of moisture? How extraordinary that in the presence of such devotion, he could stand there critical, that nothing within him kindled and glowed, that out of his heart there sprang no sympathy or approval!

Strange, is it not? Yet translate the scene into the life of to-day—and how would we act? Let it happen at our table—how

would we feel about it? Let such a woman come into church now and fling herself at the foot of the pulpit or in front of the altar—what might we look for from the startled congregation? Do we really expect to find anybody but perfectly respectable people coming to church? Have we the faintest idea how to welcome any rather doubtful people, if they do come? Sometimes we look askance at the inoffensive stranger who gets into the pew we have rented and paid for. Suppose it were a ragged tramp or a "painted lady"? What shrugging of shoulders and lifting of eyebrows and drawing back of skirts would follow! Simon isn't so different from the rest of us, is he?

Well, what was the matter with him? What is the matter with us?

I want to make you think of the peril of respectability. Have you ever considered it—the danger the ordinary respectable man or woman is in, of losing the very heart of the Christian experience? Simon's whole trouble lay in his conception of religion. The Pharisees were the good people of their day. When Christ denounced them, it was as if He were denouncing wardens and vestrymen, deacons and elders, trustees and

class leaders, in church to-day. The Pharisees were not conscious hypocrites—at least, most of them were not. They were the good people of their day; only their religion was formal and conventional. And, as usually happens with people of that religious type, they had no sense of their shortcomings—because they had no difficult standard of conduct—and so had no strain and struggle themselves and therefore no understanding of the difficulties of other people; no sympathy for sins that were different sins from their own; no appreciation of a life or a standard higher than their own and nothing but contempt for a morality which they considered much lower.

How surprised some of us would be to be told that we are just like them! And yet, what do *we* know of the heart of religion; of the soul of Christian experience? How far have we sounded the depths of divine love? How much of sympathy have we with lives not cast in the same mould as our own? We are respectable folk: does some one who is not quite so respectable put us to shame by a life of brotherly service? Is there some one who is not "in our class" who is putting his heart's blood into a work we have never thought of undertaking? Do we stand only

for "good taste" in religion; condemning crude spiritual emotionalism just as we would condemn unseemly display in social relationships?

The peril of respectability: what do I mean by it? Well, I mean that sometimes morally respectable people are just what they are because they haven't very strong feelings of any sort. Their goodness is merely negative. They are slaves to convention. They think a good deal about the opinions of other people. They value what the world approves, what society says, what people of their own class consider correct. And they are afraid to strike out against established prejudices; they always do what is customary and usual. Therefore they are not very bad. But neither are they very good.

The peril of mere respectability is that it will just be ordinary and commonplace. Therefore, in religion, as in everything else, respectable folk are apt to fall into dull and deadly mediocrity. They are content to be what they are, never dreaming that there are spiritual depths they have not sounded. They never stop to think of the possibility of things higher than they have yet attained.

Often one feels of our modern Christi-

anity, in the churches and out of them, that the most appalling thing about it is this apathetic contentment. So many of us are utterly unconscious of our moral shortcomings, we have no sufficient realization of the weakness and meagreness of our service, no strain and struggle for a higher standard, no vision of adoring love. We are satisfied with a conventional Christianity. We never look into our own souls, or know our own hearts, or face our actual spiritual condition. We do not test the reality of our Christian calling. We never ask ourselves just where we stand or what we believe. We just drift, religiously. We belong to that large class of people who, though not positively committed to the wrong, are not positively committed to the right; the class who sin in moderation, who take things easily, who have not renounced their duty to God, but on the other hand are not prepared to make too open a break with the world; people who are exhibiting, it may be, many outward marks of Christian faith and are even doing something for others, but have never really laid hold on God with a living and lasting affection.

That is what makes the preacher's task so hard these days. He feels as if he were

an apostle to the Laodiceans; and, alas! amid the rush of work, in the hurry and bustle of modern religious activity, with too little time himself for the contemplation of spiritual things, he begins to suspect that he is one of the Laodiceans himself. You remember who they were and what the Seer of Patmos was bidden to tell them in startling language: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

The message seems to be addressed to those who have been drawn out of the darkness of heathenism, who have heard the Master's voice calling them and have obeyed, who profess and call themselves Christians, and yet in whose lives there is little sign of the working of this faith; no deep, strong penitence; no warm, fervent love; no eager spirit of self-sacrifice, that sacrifice which is "the very genius of Christianity"; nothing that glows and burns and lightens up the whole life. And God says of them that possibly it were safer to be without the fold than within and careless of its privileges.

That, then, is the great peril of respect-

ability—it leaves us religiously mediocre. And this tinges our whole thought about others; fixes our attitude towards them. It makes us fail in sympathy. It makes us apathetic and indifferent. It keeps us from seeing into the heart of their problems. It creates in us a spirit of hopeless unexpectancy. It fixes a great gulf between us. It settles us in an effortless and paralyzed inactivity, in face of tremendous tasks.

I think it has been getting a little "under our skins," since the war made us break through to reality, how deadly our type of religion must seem to others sometimes. We have discovered, those of us who have had much to do with the soldiers, that they do not warm towards church religion. They are not definitely in opposition; it is merely that usually we have nothing which keenly interests them and arouses their enthusiasm. Church people seem to them stiff and cold; dull, narrow, colourless; there is nothing in the Church which they find congenial. Sermons bore them, but the hearers of sermons are as tiresome as the people who preach. They don't want gush and sentiment and demonstrative welcome; they want genial, natural, simple, unaffected comradeship—and they do not find it.

My own experience has taught me to be an optimist about the plain man everywhere, in army service or out of it. He has very simple ideas of religion, but he always gets down to essentials. Courage, unselfishness, generosity, sincerity, genuine and straightforward honesty—these make up his conception of religion. Only, unfortunately, he does not see these virtues splendidly displayed in the mediocre Church people he knows and so he has failed to connect them in any way with Christ. He does not know the Christ who was not sombre but had a winsome attractiveness, who was not narrow but free and spontaneous, whose religion was deep and overmastering and never displayed itself in effusive sentimentality.

This is the Christ we must show the men of to-day. This is the Christ we ourselves must come to know if we are to make Him known to others. I am convinced that back of some of the criticism we have heard of religious war work is the undefined and indefinable feeling which stays in the back of men's heads, even though they cannot give it clear explanation, that the Church stands for a different religion from that which they feel to be worth while. And a differ-

ent religion, of course, from the religion of Jesus Christ. There we both offend; for we are all of us content with "average" goodness, blinding our eyes to the fact that many of the world's worst evils are the result, not of appalling and outrageous wickedness, but of the mediocre moral and spiritual ideals of millions of people just like ourselves; just as good as we are—but no better!

And now a word about the woman. I take it that against the background of all I have said you have never really lost sight of her, while we have been looking so closely at Simon and ourselves.

What we have considered together prepares us to understand the real significance of work such as some of you are doing.[1] It is the glory of a society like yours that it has set itself to do for your sisters just what Christ did that day in the house of Simon the Pharisee. If what I have said has made us understand ourselves better, it will help us, in the light of that understanding, to know better the girl who has gone wrong and to find out why she is what she is.

Read back now into the story of her life

[1] This sermon was preached to the members of the Church Mission of Help, their workers and friends.

with the sympathy that comes from a little sense of our own shortcomings and you will see that very often her position is not due to her own fault. She was a girl just like other girls who love admiration—only she loved it a little too much and she did not have the same safe means of attracting it. "The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin." This girl was not so different from other girls. She craved amusement and recreation; she wanted a good time. She needed to have her good time just as much as you need it; only, she had to seek it where there were not the surroundings and safeguards that respectability provides—or used to provide—for other girls.

Or, again, you find that she was just a weak, foolish, ignorant girl, who knew nothing of life's perils and had been taught nothing of life's mysteries. Or: she was mentally and morally undeveloped—subnormal; with a woman's body and a child's mind—and our stupid respectability kept us from even discussing her problem.

Your sympathetic insight leads you to see a little way into the solution of that age-long problem. Once you have taken the new point of view and looked at the ques-

tion through eyes not dulled by self-satisfaction, you discover that the girl's footsteps were first led astray because her life had in it so little that was satisfying. Who are some of the girls for whom you care and from what surroundings and employments did they come? They were girls, were they not, for whom life was just dismally depressing, dull, hard, monotonous, joyless, squalid and ugly. There was never, for them, any happy sense of relief from the every-day task. Life was without colour or flavour, with no chance of innocent fling and abandon. So you are interested in every effort towards safeguarding morals by putting a little cheer into life—in social service corporations, children's aid societies, municipal recreation halls, school and parish house activities, all sorts of associations for help, some of them voluntary, some public and governmental. To them you bring not only your interest, but your faith and your love; for without faith and love the most up-to-date social machinery will never save.

The same sympathetic insight which makes you form plans to prevent the downfall of the girl colours all your efforts to protect and restore her, if she has slipped and fallen. That is what is meant by the

service of your representatives at the Women's Night Court. That is what is meant by your follow-up committees for girls and women referred to individuals, parishes, societies or employers. That, most of all, is what you are trying to do in providing employment, in safe surroundings, for those who are regaining moral health. Especially you are doing this to reinstate in social and religious life those whose discharge from institutional life brings special perils and calls for special friendly help, the sisterly help of those who will try to warm a soul into fuller life by putting next it the strength and comfort of our own more fortunate lives.

Yet, when I have said all that, I have only said what is least important. What we simply *must* see—what the Church Mission of Help has made it its particular business to force us to see—is that understanding alone, or sympathy alone, or prevention and protection alone, are not enough. The real thing necessary is definite religious help. Simon lacked sympathy, but Simon's sympathy (even had he given it) would not have done what Christ did. Christ brought pardon and peace. And Christ still offers that pardon and gives that peace, in His Church

and through His sacraments. His religion is more than a system of moral teaching—it is fundamentally a gift of power. It gives a standard and example; but it does more, it gives grace to follow. The real glory of your work is that you are trying to bring sick souls to Christ, that they may have everlasting health. They cannot get it from any one save the Good Physician, and you are bringing them to Him. Unless and until they can know Him as a Friend, gentle and kindly though firm, not sharply censorious but lovingly anxious, they will never have the strength to stand steadfast. You must teach them to know such a Christ. To do that, you must be sure you know Him yourself.

Do you? Do I? Or are we just conventional Christians—religious largely by inheritance and force of custom?

So I get back to the thought with which we started. Whether it be in work such as yours for women such as Simon scorned; or whether it be in work such as mine for average, every-day people; or whether it be the service of Church people generally in a world that has grown careless and indifferent largely because of our own unloveliness—we need always the same thing, a re-

ligion that has in it more love and intensity, a religion that has caught something of the winsome attractiveness of Christ.

God save us from a mere commonplace religion, that knows no heights and fears no depths; that never aims high and so has no healthy humility; that has no vision and therefore no divine discontent; that has no clear knowledge of personal sins and shortcomings and so is pharisaically critical of the sins of others; that never acknowledges the burden of sin as intolerable save in a general confession said safely in company with others; that therefore knows nothing of the joy and victory of the cross; that loves little because unconscious of how much love it needs.

Complacent content—that is the peril of respectability. And complacent content means spiritual torpor. Work such as that to which you and I and the Church in general are called in this new world now coming to the birth makes such contented torpor unthinkable. O God, make us dissatisfied with ourselves—restless till we find our rest in Thee; without peace till we have shared Thy peace with others.

II

FOR RECONSTRUCTION DAYS

Acts 1:6–8: *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me.*

THE apostles were on their way to a last conference with their Friend and Leader. I think they knew it was to be His farewell before "He led them out as far as to Bethany" that morning. They had guessed that it would be their final meeting.

In the question they put to Him we find an inkling of what they had talked about among themselves. They were keen patriots as well as devoted followers of their Lord, and they were thinking of the future of their country. Would it come again into place and power? Would there be a restoration of its old glory? Could it be re-

constructed and renewed so that it might redeem its lost opportunity?

It is the surest testimony to their patriotism that they *could* have been thinking about the nation that morning. One would have supposed that they would be thinking only of themselves. Those had been wonderful years they had spent in close companionship and friendship with Him, years which had slowly changed their lives. First, they had known Him as a friend. And such a friend! There are people in whose presence we seem to be breathing a different atmosphere, there is a subtle something about them that rests like a benediction upon us and God seems very near. So it was, we may suppose, that the disciples first knew Christ. Not without reason do the painters picture Him with a halo about His head. Goodness seemed to radiate from Him. From that first day when the Baptist had pointed Him out to Andrew and John at the riverside, they had always seen Him as in an encircling glory. Later, as their intimacy deepened, they accepted Him as the Messiah and then, as they understood more clearly all that the prophets had written of the Anointed One, they came to believe in Him as in some special sense God's own

Son and the significance of the title grew upon them as He spoke to them from time to time of His union with the Father, of His equality with Him and of the necessity of personal union with God through Him.

Wonderful years they had been, full of great hopes and expectations. Then it had all ended in tragedy and they had gone through those dark days when the heavens were as brass over their heads and the earth seemed reeling under their feet. And then had come the unexpected triumph. The Master proved His power and came back among them in shining glory. Those forty days that followed had been the most wonderful days of all, as He came to them again and again. Their hearts must have beat very fast, and their souls must have been always singing.

Now the wonderful experiences were over. He was to talk with them for the last time. We should expect them to be thinking of themselves—I mean of their personal relations with Him—what He would do for them, what they could do for Him; how the blessing of His presence was to be continued; what "the promise of the Father" would accomplish in them and through them. It shows what sort of patriots they

were, does it not, that they still thought of their country and that when the time grew short and there were only a few hurried words they could say, they asked, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

It was not wholly unselfish, of course. If the kingdom could be restored, they hoped for places in the council of the King. We can hardly suppose that they quite understood yet the spiritual nature of Christ's Kingdom or had ceased to look for His visible reign on earth. They never altogether gave up the hope of His return as an earthly King—at least they never quite lost the expectation that through Him Israel should come again to its own. And when that day of glory arrived, of course they hoped to have a share in the glory. No, they were not wholly free from ambition, but it was not selfish ambition that led them to ask the question. They loved their country; they never could rest content until it should come again to its own; they longed for the times of restoration; they saw how Jerusalem had allowed its day of opportunity to pass and they wanted to redeem all that dreary failure.

Did they wish it because they saw now

that Israel had been a chosen race, a peculiar people, in order that it might bring to the whole world the knowledge of the true God? Did they understand that its real failure had been its persistent misunderstanding of the purpose of its election, its selfish assurance that God had for some reason given Israel the blessings for its own sake? We cannot say. All we can say is that in the hour when they might have thought only of themselves they were men of the larger outlook. Their patriotism burned clear. In the short time that remained, when there was so much to ask and so little space in which to ask it, the question that rushed to their lips was the quick inquiry, What about Israel? Shall our country be saved as well as we? Is there still hope of a golden age to come? Shall we be able to redeem all the ugly past? Will there be opportunity to do all that we have failed to do? Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom?

In the Lord's answer two surprises were in store for them. First, they were to be thrown upon themselves. They were to receive power, but they must work without Him; He was going away. Even as He lifted up His hands in blessing, He was

received out of their sight. And second, as they laboured alone, they were to have no set scheme stamped with His signature, if I may put it that way. He left them no organized system. There was no definite, settled plan, fixed and determined, no pattern shown upon the mount, as Moses had received the model of the older covenant. They were called back from systems to self. Not perfect plans, that was not what He left them; but a summons to personal service. "Ye shall receive power . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto Me." After all—it was as if He said this—after all, the restoration must begin with individual consecration. If I can get the right kind of people, I can let the plans come later. Bear witness—witness to Me and to My truth; witness to all for which I gave My life when I walked the way of human helpfulness, no matter where it led or what it cost; witness to the revelation of the Father which you have had in Me; witness to the life which I came to give and to give abundantly. It all depends on you. If you are faithful, the truth will spread and the Kingdom will be established; I shall be known and the Father known through Me; Israel's election will be fulfilled, its purpose will have been

accomplished. But—how astonishing that is—it must all begin with you.

Are not we in much the same situation as were the apostles on the eve of the Ascension? We have passed through wonderful years: years of terrible trial, of "great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time"; for others, years of suffering far worse than we Americans will ever fully understand; years when for us, too, the world seemed reeling under our feet; years of industrial disorder, of social revolution, of world agony.

Now the new day is coming and we are all asking what it shall be? We are hearing, on every side, so many brilliant generalizations about the new age or the new era and all it calls for, that perhaps some of us grow a little weary of the eloquence of the orators. Yet, at heart, we are most of us intensely concerned about the future, however tired we may be of talk about it. We do know that our day of opportunity is passing and we are fearful lest we let it slip by unused. We are thinking of it, not simply as it concerns ourselves, but as it concerns the nation. We love our country as we never loved it before and we wish it to take its place of influence and power and

give to the world those great principles of justice and freedom for which, despite our backslidings, we have always stood fairly firm. Most of all, we have discovered that national self-glorification is not the highest patriotism and we are longing for the establishment of a new world order. Those of us who are Christians are praying that God will "so lock our fortunes to His purpose that through victory we may now rise into an abiding fellowship and win for the world that freedom which will enable the nations to bring their glory and honour into God's Kingdom."

All the while, and from every side, we are asked about plans. What is the new social scheme to be? What is your political platform? Will you join this organization, or that? What will the Church do? Has it a definite program? All these things, of course, we *must* think about; but let us not fail to remember that the greatest possible contribution to any social or religious or political movement is the contribution of a regenerated personality. Despite all that has been written about Christ and the social question since Professor Peabody gave us his great book, I have never seen his contention disproved, that Christ is always calling

us back from the distracting maze of programs and panaceas for the reform of the world to the reform of ourselves, which, when all is said, is the reform most needed. Christ's method makes all reform begin with the individual. He was not, in the strict sense of the word, a social reformer; certainly not a political reformer. He refused to pass judgment on methods and programs. Instead of laying down specific laws of social science, He contented Himself with arousing a new conscience that should, in time, solve all social problems. He gave no regulations, set up no laws, instituted no legislative reforms, inaugurated no new industrial system. He did something far better: He inculcated a new spirit, set men in a new attitude towards one another, put a new leaven into all social life and relationships.

Does not the Church forget, often, that its methods must always be Christ's? Men are impatient now, for example, to see new plans for corporate action. They want us "to do something" and they are demanding—and some of us are busy forming—definite organizations with programs to set forth. Of course that is necessary. And yet—and yet—is there not a possibility that

we shall become so obsessed about plans and so overloaded with organizations that we shall fail in our real work? That work is to kindle in men's hearts a passion for righteousness. It is not necessary, by corporate action, to determine just how the ideal of righteousness shall be attained. That may be left to the action of individuals, or groups of individuals, whose souls have been touched by the flame we have lighted. Am I uttering a mere platitude when I say that what we most need is not machinery, but men? I think not. It is a self-evident truth, but that is the very truth we generally forget. Like coins that have been long in use and have therefore lost their sharp edges, truth may lose its insistency just because we do not recoin and reissue it often enough.

No one can read some of the recent war literature without seeing that now, as never before, we who profess the faith of Christ must bend our energies to the task of witnessing to Him. Doubtless books like George's *Blind Alley* and Galsworthy's *A Saint's Progress* are one-sided, partial pictures of the England left by the war, but we know enough of the ugly facts at home to be confident that what they tell is the truth,

even though it be not the whole truth. And we know too, do we not, that God is still forgotten, though we hoped the war would force Him forever to our remembrance. We know that after two years of patriotic fervour men are slipping back into the old selfish ways. We know that women, their war work over, are possessed by a neurotic craving for excitement. We know that former religious sanctions have ceased to have their old restraining influence. We know that the signs of religious revival which seemed most hopeful have faded away and that religious impulse as well as patriotic practice have proved only spasmodic. And we know that the only hope of change lies in the creation of what the prophet called "the saving remnant"—a body of Christian people who are determined to "break through into reality." Be one such. Take every bit of Christian truth you know and try to live true to it. Make yourself a part of other men's lives—their hopes and fears, their joys and pains—and so do your part in giving solid substance to the dream of human brotherhood. Do not be content with an occasional recollection of God. If God is, that is the one thing that matters. Be eager for truth and service.

Never let your religion be a mild indifference and harmlessness that expends itself in the effort to live at peace with the world. Try—you will not find it easy, but try—to live long enough with Christ and closely enough, to give in your whole-hearted consent to the will of God as revealed in His Son. If we could get enough people seriously reconsecrating their lives in that way, their influence would soon be so strongly felt that our days of reconstruction would be bright with hope. It was a wise Christian statesmanship that planned in England a mission of repentance and hope before the Church began its work of national reconstruction.

It seems to me that this thought is full of practical value for us, both as a Church and as individuals.

As a Church. It is a splendid thing our generation has had in the preaching of the social gospel. The world needed this new gospel for the present age. It has borne fruit in a desire, more general than ever before, to be of real use in the world. It has set the Church and individual Christians to large tasks. But it has brought its special dangers and temptations. In the decades just past "institutional Christianity" has

so absorbed the energies of minister and people that the Church has almost ceased to be inspirational. Almost as conspicuous as the growth of the social consciousness is the fact of the neglect of worship. We cannot give more than we have, and if the essence of social activity is the application of the spirit of Christ to the problems of modern life, all our efforts are sure to be in vain and all our service as an empty shell, if we fail to feed on Christ in our hearts. Have we not been giving out and leaving no time to take in? Is it not time for us to call a halt and go back to the Source of strength?

More recently the institutional church has lost its vogue, and we are moving on to the advocacy of social justice and industrial reform. We are concerned with programs and propaganda. One hesitates in criticism for fear of being misunderstood. (I shall have to let my own record stand as the proof of my sympathy with the social movement.) And yet, is it the duty of the Church, in its corporate capacity, to pass resolutions or take action with regard to any program of reform? There are many things about which conscientious men may differ as citizens. So long as they *are* con-

scientious, is it right by any corporate action to drive them out? The Church, of course, is the conscience of the community. It must never fail, in every movement of world-progress, to make the moral issue plain. It would be far better to make mistakes than to remain inactive when great questions were pressing for the application of moral truth to their solution. Nevertheless, it is not our part to frame or endorse platforms. This is our answer to the Socialist or to the advocates of any other party. The Church must be as comprehensive as the country. Among its members, all of them conscientious and sincere, will be men of many minds. Our business is to kindle in their hearts the desire that justice and right shall be done, while yet leaving them as individuals to range themselves with any organization they will in their effort to see that it *is* done. Surely, during the long years of war, we have learned that political organization is futile without change of heart; just as surely, since the war, we have learned that industrial reform must depend upon the willingness of men to prefer justice and patriotism to personal and class interest; even now, as we form our league of nations, we are con-

scious that such a league can do little save as it helps to educate us to care more for mankind and for righteousness than for any nation's interests, even our own. These are no new discoveries. We have never lacked knowledge of moral principles; what we have always needed is power to live by the principles we so readily accept. No system will work, without the right kind of men to work it. And so the Church's task is not so much to frame programs of reform and reconstruction as to change the hearts and quicken the consciences of men. The main duty of the Church is plain: to make all its members regard their citizenship so seriously that they will be deeply conscientious, whatever course they follow. One thing, and one thing always, the Church must do: make us bring our Christian principles to bear on all problems of society and politics, fill us with the determination not to shirk our public obligations and responsibilities, charge us to labour unceasingly not merely for our own salvation but for the community's welfare and our neighbour's good, bring us to an understanding that the Gospel is not individualistic but social; make us feel the force of our Lord's words, "For *their* sakes, I sanctify myself."

The lesson for the individual is equally plain. I suspect that some of you grow rather discouraged amid the babel of voices that summon you to action. You hardly know which way to turn or what appeal to answer. Your mail is flooded with invitations to join this, that and the other society. We clergy are so energetic in our recommendations that you are a little fearful of meeting us, we seem to exude so much of the social uplift! And some of you, perhaps, are rather modest and you doubt your own competency. What would your effort amount to if you were to respond to every summons? You are just average, every-day people, with a will to do right and with only fair intelligence (so you freely admit) to judge of what *is* right. Amid the multitude of counsellors, you are tempted to listen to none.

It would seem, therefore, that you may find in the answer of Christ to His apostles a bit of comfort and cheer. However small your ability and however doubtful your judgment, here is something you *can* do: you can bear faithful witness; you can try always to "ring true"; you can seek to make your religion real and genuine. Take from me to-day this simple message of the

old-fashioned religious faith. Do not ask me to tell you just how you are to do it—it is better that you should find out for yourselves than that I should tell you, even if I could. "Ye shall receive power"—it is here for you, if you will use it—"and ye shall be witnesses." Your self-consecration is the best gift you can offer your Lord in these days when we are all hoping that the kingdoms of this world may become the Kingdom of God and of His Christ.

III

ALONE IN THE WILDERNESS

St. Luke 4:1: *And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.*

I WONDER whether most of us have not fallen into a way of thinking about the temptation of Christ which makes it lose all of its significance for us. Have we not a very vague conception of the meaning of those forty days in the wilderness?

Let me put it to you this way: Back in earlier days, when you first read the story, did the temptation seem actual? Was it like anything you knew in your own life? When you read that the Lord was driven into the wilderness to be tempted, did you not make a mental image of those weeks of conflict that robbed it of all human reality? It was a dramatic picture, was it not, some experience through which Christ passed, just to leave us an example and to make us appreciate the fact that He understood

similar experiences of our own—and yet the experience was *not* like ours: He was divine, how then could He be tempted? You thought of Him as permitting the assaults of Satan simply to show us how we should act when temptation assails us. It was all very vivid, but it did not really touch life as we know it.

Well, to this day you and I have never been able to understand it—we never shall. Involving, as the story does, the mystery of the union of Christ's two natures—the human and the divine—we can never hope to see into the heart of it, our understanding of it will always be partial and faulty. Is it that He could really be tempted, because although He was divine, all knowledge came to Him filtered through His human consciousness and so the presence and the appeal of evil were sharp and vivid in their actuality? Is it that He chose to conquer only with the same weapons which He puts in our hands—His human strength, fortified by divine grace—and so the struggle was real and agonizing? And what had the desert to do with it? Why was He driven into the wilderness to be tempted?

I never expect to understand it all, but one thing I think I can see clearly; and that

is, the significance of the wilderness solitude as a part of the story.

Christ had just come from His baptism. On the banks of the Jordan He had been publicly acknowledged by John, His forerunner, as the promised Messiah. There He had received from the Father, in the voice from heaven, the assurance of His own unique personality and power. That sense of the difference between Himself and other men had always been with Him, but now He had new evidence of it. And there He stood, also, at the threshold of His life-work and facing His life mission. He was the destined reconciler of men to God, the founder of the new Kingdom, and now all the long years of preparation were over and He must begin His ministry. Is it any wonder that He sought the desert? He had to be alone. He must have time to think, to formulate His plan; rather, to receive His Father's message and learn what the Father's plan was. As man, He must map out His work and learn how the Father would have Him use His powers. He simply must go away and be quiet and face it all alone.

The three-fold temptation, if you read the story with all this in mind, is the record of

the way in which the Prince of Evil sought to divert Him from the path of duty which the Father had marked out and induce Him to take some short cut to success. He might win His way by cultivating the crowd and riding into power on a wave of popularity. He might look at His life's vocation as the world would view such service and think of the influence He could gain and the kingdoms He could win. Meanwhile, He had great powers and it might be perfectly lawful to use them to make His task easier. Why not? Why suffer needlessly? Why struggle handicapped by unnecessary inconveniences and hindrances?

All these temptations are incident to the flight into the wilderness, not an essential part of it. They are the same temptations that recur throughout His whole life—when Peter sought to stay the journey to Jerusalem; when the Pharisees asked of Him a sign; when the taunting watchers on Calvary bade Him come down from the cross if He would have them believe. They are temptations such as come to every man who knows himself to be endowed with great gifts and understands that he should use them for God and yet feels himself constantly lured from the heights and bidden to

seek the easier road and walk the smoother path.

Compare the story of the wilderness temptation with the record of Peter's remonstrance with Him on the last journey to Jerusalem. By this time it was plain, even to the dull disciples, that there lay before Him no easy road to victory. They knew that if He persisted in going up to Jerusalem there was bound to be trouble and conflict. Why, then, must He go, just now, to face that bitter opposition? Why not stay away from the capital and wait till times were more hopeful? Up in Galilee He had been hailed as a national deliverer and His progress had been a veritable triumph; why not go back there and bide His time and wait till the trouble could blow over; strengthen the fellowship of His followers and form a party and go back to the city with the crowd behind Him? So Peter reasons, and the rebuke of Christ, so personal and so severe, seems absolutely unwarranted, unless we understand how keen was the appeal made by the apostle's argument. The whole force of that appeal lay in the echo it finds in every human heart—and Christ was perfectly human—in the natural desire to take the easier course

and avoid difficult obstacles. Had Christ listened to Peter He would utterly have failed in His mission. That is the reason He says to the apostle, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." The temptation is the old suggestion of the wilderness days to take some other road than God's path and use some other method than that of God's choosing. When He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, He was repeating in action what He had said more than three years before in the desert. It was as if He were saying that it matters not when we leave this life; what really matters is *how* we leave it. The only thing that really counts in this life is character, because character is the only thing we take with us when life ends. It is as if He were saying, God never meant to make life easy, He meant to make men great; He wants men of tremendous determination, of unflinching persistence in living true to all that God requires, men who will do just what truth and honour demand and close the ear against any suggestion of compromise with God's purposes.

I have wandered away from my point, perhaps, but I have said all this, so that you may see that all His life long Christ was facing the very same temptations which

were pressed upon Him in the wilderness; only that there, back at the beginning of His ministry, He was forced to face them for the first time, in the opening crisis of His career, when He was engaged in resolving what to do with His life and how to do it, listening to the voice of God and harmonizing it with the movements of His own soul.

Back we go now to the desert, to ask why Christ was there. Not, of course, because He wanted to do something dramatic and picturesque that would print the story on men's memories. No, He was in the wilderness by a kind of moral necessity. He was there, in order to be alone and settle His life's work. Resolutely putting into the background any thought of personal discomfort, He bent Himself to the task of translating the message He knew God would give Him; He would think and think hard till He should know just what was God's purpose for Him; think and think hard, alone, lest the spell of the experience should pass away. It was not so much that He deliberately fasted—the fasting, you remember, has always loomed so large in our understanding of the scene—as that His emotion was so great as to transcend all common interruptions, His concentration so

strong and steady and the current of His thought so deep as to make Him wholly oblivious of everything else.

I am sure I have not been overbold in speculation when I put it this way. I only wish to make it clear to you, as it is to myself, that it was perfectly natural for Christ to go into the wilderness, because when He came to wrestle with His life's problem He must wrestle alone, face to face with the Father whom He was to serve.

It is an experience of His—this wilderness watching—common with men who do great tasks.

John the Baptist went into the desert for the very same reason. He came as the immediate forerunner of Christ, charged with all that his nation had dreamed of during long centuries of alternate hope and despair. He, too, might have sought his following in Jerusalem, and begun his work at once, but he, too, had to be alone, to brood and ponder and weigh the message he was to deliver; he must not have his mind distracted by one thought from without; he must catch every word, lose not a single syllable of the story he was soon to tell of the Christ who was so near.

It was the same with St. Paul. The great

apostle writes that immediately after his conversion he went into Arabia to stay for the best part of three years. Why, but because he must find time for adjustment and see how he was to lay the foundations of the Kingdom and proclaim the faith of Christ, its King?

It is reasonable to suppose that the rule of Arabia was the custom of the apostle's whole ministry. At stated times he went apart to renew and replenish the Christ-life within. It is doubly reasonable to suppose that he did this because this, too, was the rule of Christ Himself. The wilderness of temptation was not His only retreat. Before every great crisis in His life we find Him seeking solitude. Before He chose His apostles; when He was about to ask the momentous question of St. Peter; when the crowds began to press Him and He had not so much as time to eat and sleep; during all the great Holy Week, when "in the daytime He was teaching in the temple and at night He went out and abode in the Mount that is called the Mount of Olives"—always quiet thought and prayer strengthened Him for action. Gethsemane itself was His last solemn retreat, which gave Him strength to face Herod and Pilate and the Sanhe-

drim with perfect self-mastery and unmatched bravery, with determination to stand firm for principle and with utter scorn of all dubious ways of escape.

I think all this may show us something of the purpose and privilege of Lent.[1] To the shallow and careless Christian it may be merely a substitute, in religious disguise, for real spiritual effort. The newspaper humorist pokes fun at it as a diversion for the socially weary. Christians of other communions may look at those who keep it and find good reason for supposing that somehow we fancy we can atone for a year of indifference by a busy round of church services and be saved by much preaching. Of course Lent is not any of these things. It is just the Church's answer to a human need; the Church's way of thrusting spiritual opportunity upon us. It is the Christian rule by which she calls to our recollection the necessity of doing our part in making God a great reality. You remember how Elijah taunted the prophets of Baal. "Where is your god?" he asked. "Is he asleep and must he be awaked? Is he on a journey and must you call him back?" Our God is not talking, nor pursuing, nor on

[1] Preached on the first Sunday of the Lenten season.

a journey, nor asleep. It is *we* who are so. We have only to stop a while our running after we know not what, or hush other clamorous voices, or arouse ourselves from sluggish spiritual slumber, and we shall find God at our side. Lent, if kept aright, must be kept in quietness, with much time to ourselves, with fully as much of private prayer as there is of public services, with more listening to God than attendance at formal preaching.

Have you ever considered how little we are alone? Most of our hours are necessarily spent in the companionship of others and even when the opportunity for privacy comes we run away from it. Seemingly we shrink from the experience of being alone with our own thoughts. "Watch a man of business in a railroad station, about to board his train for a journey, long or short," says a layman—not a clergyman. "With feverish haste he is laying in a stock of newspapers which will keep him from thinking until he has reached his destination. If you will observe him in his place in the car, you will see him making his way quickly but thoroughly from one end of a newspaper to the other. As fast as he finishes one he throws it upon the floor, seizes

another and with unabated zest devours a slightly different version of the same events, always treating the important and the trivial with strict impartiality. Such people cannot possibly know the refreshment of communion with the Unseen. They have no reservoir of spiritual power upon which to draw in time of need."

No reservoir of spiritual power! That is the point. If God's companionship is to be realized, we must clear the way for His approach; we must make our wilderness where we can be alone with Him. Other thoughts must be banished, that this one great thought may possess us and fill us and charge us with its power. Prayer comes afterward. Prayer indeed is useless unless it be addressed to God after we have tried to realize that God is near.

No reservoir of spiritual power! Why, the principle is so plain that we use it even in daily business. The practical problems of every-day life demand quiet and intense thought—a mind so concentrated that it finally seizes upon the core of the subject and looks around it and through it and sets it by itself and images it forth. "It was in this way," says Robertson, "that one of the greatest of English engineers is said to have

accomplished his most remarkable triumphs. Sometimes a difficulty brought all his work to a pause. Then he would shut himself up in his room, abandon himself intensely to the contemplation of that on which his heart was set and at the end of two or three days would come forth serene and calm and walk to the spot and quietly give orders which seemed the result of superhuman intuition."

This is the only way in which we shall learn, not simply how to do our work, but how to do it as God would have us. Do we give much thought to what God wants us to do or what He wants us to be? The measure of a man's power is his depth, and the quality of depth comes only by going apart, that truth may be taken into the soul. Most of us, when on occasion we do give some slight thought to God's purpose for us and God's use of us, somehow expect God to tell us everything, whether we listen or not. "Now let God speak, and speak quickly, for I haven't much time." It is my own conviction that the only way to have light upon your difficulties or guidance in your life, is to wait quietly upon God, to wait and wait, until finally you hear Him speak, or at least feel the message.

And surely, if you want not simply God's guidance but His companionship, this is the only way you can realize it. "When you're with other people you feel sometimes as if you were alone," said a young man at a mission, "but as soon as you're alone, then you begin to feel that you're not alone." Dr. Mason tells of an elderly man, a labourer, who came to see him one morning, after a mission service and sermon, and sat down, his quaintly chiselled face twitching with smiles. "I asked him," said the missioner, "if there was anything I could do for him, but he said no. Presently, with hesitation, he said, 'I did what you told us to do last night.' (I had been speaking about Jacob when he was alone, and wrestled.) 'And you found what you wanted, did you, John?' I asked. He only burst out with a long peal of laughter and answered, 'Yes, I did.' I saw him again, some ten years after, and he had not lost the mirth which the finding of Christ had brought him, though of course it had become deeper and more quiet."

There are so many men and women—you and I among them—whose lives lack that depth which solitude and silence alone can give. Nothing will take root in a soil that

is constantly being turned over and nothing will find rest in a life that has no quiet depths. It was not by an accident that Jesus went into the wilderness; it was in obedience to one of the laws of life. That is the way He learned what His Father wished Him to do, and that is the way He gained strength to do it. Indeed, if it actually be true that He was so human that He did all things with only man's powers, that is the way He learned that He was never alone—because the Father was with Him. If the wilderness and the mountain-top and the garden were necessary for Him, surely they are for us.

IV

THE CALL OF THE LAITY

1 St. Peter 2:9: *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

I HAVE come here to speak to you men on the call of the laity.[1] Well, what is a layman? We have been satisfied, too often, with a merely negative definition. The layman is a Churchman who is not in holy orders. That implies a good many other assumptions, all introduced by a *not.* Not a clergyman; therefore not specially called and chosen; not supposed to be living a specially consecrated life; not having a priest's responsibility; not expected to do certain things; not engaged actively in the service of the Church; not finding his chief joy and obligation in any work distinctly religious. Always it is assumed that some

[1] An address to members of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

sharply drawn line quite naturally separates those who are in holy orders from those who are not; and the layman's life is therefore a lower one, his duties lighter, his path easier, his responsibility less clearly defined.

A writer in *The Commonwealth*, some years ago, pointed out that the *laos* were the *whole people* of God, the elect race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation. The *laos* were the whole elect race, the *kleros* the special charge allotted to any worker within the holy nation. In other words, so splendid and sacred a distinction was it to be within the people of God that no later distinctions within the Body were anything like as important. That is the first point we need to emphasize. Religion is not the business of the man in holy orders to such an extent that the layman may leave to the clergy the real work of the Church while he concerns himself wholly and, as he imagines, necessarily, with secular things.

The error of the past has been that in emphasizing the need of the ministerial priesthood we have failed to show that it is the expression of the priesthood of the whole Body. The clergy are representatives of the corporate priesthood of all believers. They have a special function as

ministers of the word and sacraments, but as such they are organs of the Body, the arm of the Church. As in our bodies different members have different offices, so in Christ's Body the Church. The Christian priesthood is not a caste or a class; the ideal of its ministry is not a class ideal. Clergyman and layman are alike members of the Body, each with his own office and work, each responsible for the advancement of the Kingdom.

Our tendency has been to proceed, perhaps unconsciously and unintentionally, on an opposite theory, so that religion and theology are supposed to be entirely an affair of the man in orders and gradually the whole work of the Church has been left in increasing measure to the clergy. The layman either knew nothing about it and lost interest, or did not understand the methods by which it was done and became utterly indifferent, or positively disapproved and grumbled or rebelled. He came to feel that the only thing that was expected of him, the only thing he was ever really called upon to do, was to supply the funds by which the work was carried on. Having done that (if perchance he did do it), he stepped aside and shunted all the responsi-

bility to other shoulders, save in one or two instances where he came to feel that his gifts of money entitled him to a mild dictatorship in parochial affairs. Usually, however, there are few "lay popes." The general effect of the system is rather that clergy and people live in different worlds. The priest does not understand the layman's task, does not know his temptations, cannot enter into his thought. The layman cannot fathom the clerical mind. The clergyman is tempted to divorce doctrine from life; the layman to divorce life from doctrine. Meanwhile the life of the Church languishes and the thought of the Church stagnates. In course of time, the original error has borne fruit in a false conception of clerical and lay ideals. The two standards of life are supposed to be entirely different, their conceptions of service as wide apart as the poles; the duty of discipleship is forgotten, and the clerical calling becomes a class by itself, with the terrible possibility that it may degenerate into something purely official and professional; while the laity (all the rest of the Church) face the equally serious possibility that their religion may become formal and conventional, a mere nonchalant acceptance of truth, their

faith and practice resting on authority alone, without experience, their individual obligation lost in a loose corporate idea. All of which sounds trite, commonplace and academic, of course. But, as plain matter of fact, it is vitally important and highly practical.

Half the parish troubles with which a bishop's life is burdened come from the failure of the clergy to see in their vestries, or boards of trustees, not an evil to be bemoaned, but splendid possibilities of service to be developed. They cannot bring themselves to step aside once in a while and give the layman a real chance. They cannot see that it is the first duty of the minister to make every effort—in spite of his discouragements and setbacks—to enroll their people in service. In every walk of life the successful man is the man who can get other people working. The successful business man is not the man who tries to do everything himself, but the man who quickens enthusiasm in other men, finds out what they can do, sets them at work on it —and lets them alone. The successful clergyman is not the one who has so exalted an idea of his office that he insists on "bossing the whole job," if you will let me

use that expressive slang phrase. His real task ought to be that of inspiring other men to service. His success will come when he learns how to find in men talents for service and then inspires them to use their abilities for the work of the Kingdom. Every clergyman should pray for fuller personality, for more of personal magnetism—the gift is not simply a birth inheritance; we all have the seeds of personal power, lying there ready for cultivation, and no man need be negative and colourless, save as he is content to be so.

So, I would say to the clergy: Let the layman know that he counts for something. Give him something to do, and then let him do it—and do it in his own way, without interference or over-guidance. Make the parish not a field, but a force. Be a captain of industry, not simply a spiritual chaplain.

But if half my troubles come from the clergy who will not see the possibilities of lay service, a large proportion of the other half come from the criticisms of laymen who have never begun to do their duty. "The Church should do this," they tell me; "the Church should do that." Apparently, they are forgetful that the Church is just

themselves and a lot of other people like them, not a vague entity for which the bishops and clergy are in some way wholly responsible.

Here in America, surely, there is little excuse for a layman's indifference. For centuries the Church was regarded, apparently, as the special possession of the ministerial order, but in America we have reverted to the primitive democracy of the early Christian days. For, indeed, the legislative powers given to our laymen are quite in keeping with primitive practice. Archbishop Benson brings this out very clearly in connection with his account of the baptismal controversy in the North African Church. The councils, he tells us, were really representative. Their members were men of the world who were penetrated with Christian ideas, the very flower of the episcopate; yet the results reached were uncharitable, anti-scriptural, uncatholic—and unanimous. Why? Because the laity were silent. Cyprian was neglecting principles he himself had stressed in the earlier days of his episcopate, and the councils were purely clerical councils in which laymen had no voice. Because the laity had no place in the Church legislation, disaster followed.

Yet it was among the laity principally that there were in existence and at work the very principles which so soon not only rose to the surface, but overruled for the general good the voices of the councillors themselves. "The mischief was silently healed, by the simple working of the Christian Society."

It is a matter for just pride, not a subject of weak apology, that in our national Church nothing of importance in the way of legislation can pass, except by a vote of the three orders. For that matter, what good would it do if legislation were passed without lay consent? Even if true, the proclamation of the council would be academic apart from the firm conviction of its truth and vitality, of its importance and usefulness, by the whole Body of the Church. Had the bishops and clergy, some years ago, changed the Church's present name to something more satisfactory, what advantage would have followed of necessity? The essential thing was to make a catholic-minded Church, not merely to give the Church a catholic name—and a Church can be truly catholic in spirit only when its lay members have been converted to the catholic life.

Nor is that all. We want, not a grudging acceptance but a thankful appreciation of the place of the laity in the organization, government and legislative authority of the American Church. Again and again in our history we have seen that the mind of the whole Church is wiser than the mind of any order or class. And even when, for the time being, the principles at stake seem to have been sacrificed, it has been abundantly evident that any assertion of them apart from a firm conviction of their truth by the whole Body would have been, as I have pointed out, largely academic.

So the really essential thing in the development of a better, or more efficient and effective laity in the Church is a frank and full recognition of the vitality of the lay membership. Tell the layman that he counts for something and he will make himself amount to something. Show him his high calling and help him to magnify his office and there will be no question of his activity and usefulness in the Church's work. "Will the time ever come," asks Canon Bate, "when to be baptized, confirmed and a communicant is felt to be of itself the highest of all vocations? We feel and speak now as if the difference between

man and priest, priest and layman, were a difference in kind, whereas that between Churchman and non-Christian were only a difference in degree. Shall we ever come again to feel that to be in or out of the Body of Christ is an alternative so tremendous that in comparison with it the difference between priest and layman dwindles into insignificance?"

Bishop Westcott has pointed out that we must concede real authority to those from whom we ask substantial service. There must be a sense of responsibility running through every part of the Body, if every part is to exercise its function and perform its work. Only so can we bring to all parts of a society, often isolated and discordant, the consciousness of one duty, one aim, one service. The Church will be crippled in its work so long as this unity is lacking. The most exalted conception of the ministerial priesthood is not inconsistent with—nay, it must be gladly held in common with—the thought of the priestly Body, whose every member feels himself a member, not a mere isolated unit. Any other conception of the priesthood makes the Church an organization superimposed upon its people, rather than an organism which *is* its people, which

reflects their life, grows with them, works through them.

"Life corrected the error of thought," says Archbishop Benson of the Cyprianic councils. Right living will usually correct wrong thinking, and in the Church it must be the life of the whole Body that ripens and perfects its thought and enlarges and quickens its work. The corporate life alone can meet the problems of to-day: problems of theological thought, problems of action, problems of economic peace, of national and international justice and fair dealing. Only when we have recovered our hold on this truth will the Church really be a working Church and a believing Church.

I have enlarged upon this conception of the Christian society because I see no hope of developing an actively serving laity save as we make it clear that between the member and the minister there is no difference of essential obligation in the Christian calling. The only difference is in the way the service shall be rendered and the circumstances in which it is to be fulfilled. The standard of service is alike, to redeem and consecrate all human life, individual and corporate, personal and social, and to bring it into the Kingdom of God.

That demands service, of necessity, and the layman will see it the moment he senses his high calling. He will no longer be indifferent; he will no longer be summoned from such indifference by a call to support the Church gratefully as the society which offers him help; he will come to greet it with great joy as the Body which claims of him service. He will not regard the Church, or think of its worship, or listen to its teaching, solely as a varying repetition of the offer, "See what I can do for you." He will regard it rather as the great challenging voice which demands, "What will you do for me—and for the cause for which I exist?" That is the very purpose of the priesthood. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering."

In St. Paul's catalogue elsewhere he lists the diversities of gifts in such order as to imply that work for the Church may have its sphere of activity outside the Church. When he speaks of "first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues," we

might easily paraphrase the list in modern nomenclature. By apostles we would understand bishops; by prophets those who are gifted with the ability to discern the times, whether preachers, poets or editors; by teachers, all who exercise the teaching office in any way; by miracles, scientific discoveries, the marvels of engineering, etc.; by gifts of healing, surgeons, physicians; by helps, the whole order of business and professional and industrial life; by governments, the political and economic order; by tongues, the world of literature and scholarship. Every honourable calling is a part of the divine order, working for God's honour and glory and not for self-advancement, working in the power of the selfsame Spirit who divideth to every man severally as He will.

While we need, however, to emphasize the sacredness of all life, to recognize all work as religious work, the layman will not actually rise to his responsibility until he discovers that the advancement of the Kingdom and the evangelization of men is as much his task as it is the special work of the clergy. Evangelization! The word calls up scenes of crude excitement at revival services, with methods wholly foreign

to our ideas of worship and offending our sense of reverence, with a free use of religious phraseology that verges on sacrilege and smacks of canting insincerity. But all this is not of the essence of the evangelistic spirit. The call comes to every Christian, clergyman or layman, *to think of the man or woman outside* and then—mindful of what religion means to him and of what those outside miss in not accepting the faith which has so changed his life—to try to put the warmth of his heart and life against another man's heart and life and fire him with faith, zeal and devotion. The curse of mass evangelism is that it has become professionalized. What we need is to take it out of the hands of revivalists; for that matter, to cease to act as if the work of converting men were solely the province of a ministerial order, and to make it a matter, not of professional duty, but of spontaneous individual and personal interest. The preacher's work is largely the edification of those who have already accepted the Christian religion; he ministers necessarily, in some degree of limitation, only within the walls of the Church (though, of course, he should not be content to have it so) and it is for those whom he is building up in the

faith to bring others to hear the gospel call which he utters. In the long run lay labour will win more people, and win them more surely and keep them longer, than any other method of evangelistic work.

What, then, is a layman? A member of Christ, called with an high calling, labouring to bring to others the blessings he himself so richly enjoys.

If you could only know, men and brothers, how hard I pray that, in this sense, you may become ministers of Christ, that you may learn the real obligations of membership in the Body of Christ. Sometimes I sink down, hopeless and helpless, at the thought of all we need to do. I preach sermons and I feel that it is a fruitless effort. My ministry seems to be "cribbed, cabined and confined," exercised only for the edification of those who already believe. I meet and talk with men outside, and I feel that they have put me in a class by myself and set up barriers that keep me from getting at their hearts. I speak from public platforms, and it seems to me that every word I say is discounted by men's suspicion of clerical professionalism. ("Of course I speak as I do; isn't it my business to be moralizing?") And then I picture what

our progress might be, if the laymen realized their duty to win men to Christ and His Church. When *I* speak, men regard it as a performance of professional duty, though God knows it is not. When *you* speak, they cannot but think that what you say is a matter of spontaneous and natural interest. *I* work, and it is a work which men expect me to do, because I have a pride in filling my particular job; *you* work, and it is the service of men just like themselves, a work in which they cannot fail to show some little interest, when they see that it is real and vital for you.

Is it real? Is it vital? Does your faith mean much to you? You men of the Brotherhood are pledged to prayer and service. Put your whole self into your task. Work hard enough to shame us of the clergy, if you will. Remember that your responsibility and mine are the same. Do not forget to draft a new definition of what a layman is. He is a member of Christ, called with an high calling, called to bring to others blessings which he richly enjoys. You are citizens of the Kingdom. You are co-workers with God.

In the affairs of every-day life, you have difficulties and you glory in overcoming

them. Why run away from difficulties in your work to God? What would you think of me if I turned tail and fled? If you are dead in earnest, you will not fly any more than I. Some of you have gifts of leadership—you have proved it in the world of business. Here are followers at hand, with all their faults, who will get behind you, if you will only lead. And more of the clergy than you suspect have gifts of leadership, too, if you will only show a readiness to follow.

V

THE DEBT OF THE EDUCATED MAN

St. Luke 12:48: *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

THAT means you.[1] Surely, the injunction is for college men, even though everybody else be excused. For to you much has been given. You of all men must own yourselves and your work to be tied up with other people. Your horizon must never be bounded by your own interests.

Why? Because all that you have of knowledge and power you hold in stewardship. Plainly, to you of all men it has been given in trust. Stewards? Why, you are not even in that class as yet—to-day you are just debtors; and badly in debt. Already the community is calling upon you for payment.

[1] A commencement address to college graduates.

I am talking to you, of course, in very plain and straight language. I shall not soar into the blue empyrean and try to hit the stars! Let us leave all that to "spell-binders" who come on oratorical errands. I shall keep my feet on the solid earth and pull you down with me to the consideration of simple facts. I want you to think of the debt of the educated man.

For, indeed, you are in debt. There is not an educated man to-day who has paid for his education. The student in college or university, rich or poor, never pays in full for what he receives. In college, just as truly as in public schools supported at public expense, somebody else has paid part of his bill. He may be rich enough to pay in full, but as a matter of fact he has not paid. There is no way in which he *can* pay in cold cash, because there is no college or university in the land with tuition fees large enough for it to be run just for those who can pay and for no one else. If there were such a college, it would not exist very long. It could not gather together any sort of faculty and it would not do work worthy of the name. At any rate, without arguing the point of the possibility of founding such an institution on undemocratic lines, actu-

ally there is none. All owe their existence to the generosity of public and private benefactors. No university that depended only on its tuition fees at their present figure could keep its doors open a single year.

It is worth while, at commencement, to ask why the state and individuals have contributed in such lavish manner to our educational institutions. Why have states built and equipped universities? Why are wealthy men of public spirit strengthening such institutions? Why are cities levying taxes for the support of advanced schools? The answer is very plain. Simply because we expect the community to receive from educated men a return upon the investment. If in the case of individual giving that motive may sometimes be obscured, it is unquestionably the only motive that justifies state aid and support. Every dollar spent on higher education carries a plain, straight, homely message to the educated men of to-day. It says: "You, gentlemen, have not been educated at less than cost because the state or men of public spirit cared for *you* in particular, but because *your* education was expected to aid in the uplift of the community. Men have hoped to find in you leadership in the social, the intellectual,

the economic and political life of the community; or they have seen what such leadership has meant in the past—that is the real reason they have given of their means to strengthen the institutions which have trained you."

We must make no mistake about it, therefore. To every educated man the city, the state, the nation, says: "You start life in debt; you owe something to the community. We expect of you, and we have a right to expect, payment of that debt. We look to you for high standards, splendid ideals, unselfish service. If on no other ground than this one of an honest business return on our investment, we ask of you a public-spirited activity and leadership."

There is, of course, a higher claim upon us, the claim of *noblesse oblige*, the truth that from those to whom much has been given much shall be required; but even place it upon the lower ground, and is it not a debt of honour for which payment is asked? For this or that particular man, relatively speaking, the community cares nothing; he is but a unit in the social life. But he has been trained that the community may be bettered by and through him as an agent for the state or the private benefactor. All

that has been done for him has been done in expectation of such a return.

Yet, in the years just passed, who were the people that in largest numbers shirked public duties, if not men of culture and refinement? Who washed their hands of public responsibilities, if not the men of the very class represented by the average college graduate?

The war gave us a new spirit. Wonderful potentialities of patriotism were revealed during the conflict, and nowhere has the record been brighter than among college men. We have all been proud of you. Your quick response to the call of country, your eager adventure for justice and liberty, your democratic spirit of service, has given you a place in our hearts from which you can never be shut out. Under the generous impulse of service and sacrifice the real spirit of college men has been manifested in a splendid way. Only, do not let us forget the battles of peace. At the high call men rise to splendid heights, but in humdrum days, ideals are dulled all too soon. The man who has the courage of the crisis often fails in the courage of the commonplace. The war came, fortunately, before it was too late for us to learn its lessons

—war which stripped us of some of our creature comforts and made the things of the spirit loom large, war which summoned us to fight for an ideal, war against men who had made the conflict so hideously ugly that to some extent it shamed sin and selfishness out of our hearts. We were preserved from utter surrender to love of luxury, selfish ease, materialism, moral indifference, money-madness. We discovered that at the core American life is sound. Most of all, we discovered the glorious possibilities of its young life. Many a college man who gave himself to his country's service has come back eager to continue in service. He wants to make new payments on his debt as an educated man.

Even before the war there were abundant signs that things were changing. Universities themselves were taking on a new sense of responsibility to the community. The rapid progress of new social ideals in the decade before the war, the quick growth of new political ideals, have been due in very large measure to the aroused consciences of university men and women. Some of us remember the wave of enthusiasm that swept over the young men of American colleges when Mr. Roosevelt first

appealed to their spirit. More than any other man of this generation, he ranged people for or against him as loyal, zealous supporters or indignant and outraged opponents; but opponents and supporters alike unite now in appreciation of the service he rendered in quickening the consciences of young men of position and education to a new conception of their social and political responsibilities. It meant much, too, that his successor has shown a most extraordinary sense of the dignity of his position since he left public office, and a notably high and unselfish desire to support the man who followed him. It is something, again, that in this successor we have a man to whom higher education has always meant higher ideals and in whom the dullest opponent or the most prejudiced critic cannot fail to find always the spirit of service. Three different men, whose names I cannot mention without dividing you all into groups of partisans, yet all of them—right or wrong, men of vision or mistaken misfits, call them what you will—all of them hearing the summons to service and trying to answer it.

That call for service and leadership was never stronger than now. With the war ended, we are facing serious problems that

demand trained judgment, calm reasonableness and high endeavour. America has been moving very rapidly of late to a more popular form of government, or at least towards a freer expression of popular opinion. This movement in political life has synchronized with social movements no less significant—movements which, now that the world war is over, may be far reaching in social and economic change. At such a time there is special need of enlightened and conscientious leadership. Leadership there will be; leaders there are, some of them moved by a deep and passionate resentment. Shall they, with their sense of wrong and their hatred of what they consider the entrenched forces of evil, be allowed to lead towards revolution? Or may we look to men like you to balance and steady popular thought? May we look to you, who so readily left places of privilege to take your part in the world conflict, side by side with men of poor advantage—may we look to you now to take your place again by the side of the unprivileged and to try to think out their thoughts, and to work with them towards the solution of our common problems? If you fail to see the glory of service and think only of the rewards of

privilege, not of its responsibilities, how fearful may be the penalty you will pay for your indifference; what pains and punishments must society and the nation bear, because of your neglect!

I suppose most of you have read two remarkable novels by Stephen McKenna, *Midas and Son* and *Sonia.* The former is the tragic story of the moral and spiritual downfall of a young millionaire, whose career was cursed by his inability to set himself to work in ways of service; a rich young man with no real object in life. There is a very striking passage in the story, where one of the characters, Yolande, discusses with the young millionaire the father's last letter to the son. The millionaire had won money and power and in winning them had been left a broken wreck. Now his one hope is to make his son understand how the power which passes to him shall be used. He does not understand his boy, though in his hard way he loves him; but at least he knows the young man's weakness and with his last bit of strength tries to make him see the responsibility of place and privilege. Yolande puts her finger on the weak spot in his argument and pleads with the son, in an effort to make him see what the father has been

groping after blindly. "You both of you seem to miss one very important thing," she says, "and that is, that you are in debt to the world and that you've got to pay the debt. You're morally committed to a life of public service."

Raymond, one of the other fine characters in the book, puts the same thought in words the truth of which has now been made everlastingly clear. "The new ethical attack," he says, "has to be launched against the cruelties and dirtinesses and dishonesties which are sanctioned by every-day custom and extolled as part of our competitive system of rivalry." Were power his, he knows how he would use it in setting up new standards of education and service. Probably we all feel that we know how to use advantages which are not ours. The serious question is whether, in our own particular case and with our own peculiar talents, we are trying to learn for what purpose our gifts were given us. Do we really think of the responsibility and privilege of our own bit of power?

In *Sonia*, the hero of the book, O'Rane, the young Irish enthusiast, shows how one man solves the problem. Read the two books and tell me whether the contrast be-

tween Deryck's weak and nerveless selfishness and O'Rane's undiscouraged service does not make your own blood tingle with the desire to use for others the blessings you so richly enjoy. You, too, my friends, are in debt to the world. You, too, are bound to pay the debt. You, too, are "morally committed to a life of public service."

The note, then, which over and over we strike to-day is this note of service. After all, it is really the predominant thought of the age. Even in business competition it is not unheard. Competition used to mean simply the ability to boast entertainingly of one's own commercial products and industriously depreciate the wares of one's competitors; now it is the ability to produce something the public needs and to make it better than any one else makes it—in other words, the ability to serve.

All this by way of aside. Back we come now to ourselves. The call to service comes to you as to those who are among the privileged. By reason of your social and intellectual advantages, your scholarly training, your better knowledge of the forces of human life, you must be leaders among men, making society better and purer, social and

industrial conditions more just and generous, business and professional ideals higher, politics cleaner. You must carry to others what you received yourselves. You must share your advantages. You must pass on your privilege. You must pay society the debt you owe for the things we have given you.

Who that has read George Eliot's *Middlemarch* will ever forget the character of Caleb Garth? He was something of a scholar, you remember, for a man of his position in life; a bit of a student and theorist, perhaps, who had not made much of a success of his career. His work was conscientious, and he loved it, but he lacked the practical qualities which made it pay. Then at last his worth was recognized and there came a letter offering him the management of two large estates. It meant the resuscitation of his private fortunes, opportunities of education for his children, ease for himself and his wife; but that was not what he thought of first. "It's a fine bit of work, a fine thing to come to a man," he said, "to have the chance of getting a bit of country into good fettle, and putting men into the right way with their farming, and getting some good contriving and solid building

done, that those who are living and those who come after will be the better for. I'd sooner have it than a fortune. I hold it the most honourable work there is." Then, after a pause, "It's a great gift of God."

Garth and men of his type are no creatures of fiction. We know them. We recognize the portrait because we have seen such men in real life. When a crisis comes, when any good cause is in jeopardy, to whom do we turn but to men like Garth—men now of one station in life, now of another, men who are often overworked, but are ever ready to take up new duty, and always, even when over-tasked, the happiest men in the world—men who rescue the good cause, and carry the burdens of the community, and gladly and cheerfully do their own share, as well as the share of the pessimist who has shirked, the lounger who has criticized, the disgruntled grumbler, and all the rest of that numerous body of "out of step" folk, who believe in no one and hope for nothing and expect only failure.

Your vocation and ministry in life must be like Garth's; like that of all Garth's successors who have served their country so well in the trying days through which we

have passed. Your responsibility for service is positive, not negative—not criticism, but work; not even clear thinking only, but constructive action. Some years since Senator Lodge expressed the opinion that the chief defect of our modern educated life was its tendency to arouse unduly the critical spirit, manifesting itself in a censoriousness and dissatisfaction with things in general, coupled with an incapacity for action. There are plenty of intellectual mugwumps in the world, and they are always barren of lasting achievement. They sit complacently on judgment stools, passing cynical criticisms on evils which they make no effort to correct. They are constantly pointing out defects and never getting down into the turmoil and strife to remedy what they deplore. There is a meeting of some committee and things go wrong. Strong differences of opinion are revealed; questions of principle are involved. Who leave? Why, the very men who ought to stay, the men whose advantage of privilege should make it incumbent upon them to stay, rather than leave the issue with the wrong-headed and cantankerous. Things go wrong in politics and even nomination by primary does not keep out the unworthy! Why? Simply

because when we leave the matter to others in utter disgust, we leave it to those who are not quite so delicate-minded as ourselves!

Ah! the world needs—all those weak brothers who want bracing up, all the strong ones whose hands should be upheld, they need—the world needs us every one, and needs us in the fighting ranks or at their head, not with the grumblers in camp.

After all, what is the city, the state, the nation, the Church, but ourselves—just you and I and Smith and Brown and Jones and Pickwick — ourselves and thousands of others like us. If anything needs to be done, one of us must start to do it; it cannot be relegated to some general body of which we vaguely feel that it is not doing its duty. We need individual righteousness before we can have state righteousness. The city and the state will do their duty only when we begin to do ours. If those who by reason of larger opportunity ought to be better fitted for leadership leave some one else at the wheel, they have no right to complain about the course over which they are driven.

And so I sound the call to you to-day. Let me sound it in another's words,

stronger than my own. Listen: "The world boasts that, because of power, therefore one may be indifferent to the weak; because of talent, one may be careless of innocence; because of riches, one may be excused if he is hard. Christ reversed all this, and we know Christ was right. Because a man has power, therefore he ought to protect the weak; because a man has talent, therefore he ought to be better than other men; because a man is cultured, therefore he should show greater sympathy. Whatever makes it possible to enter more into life, to know more of the world, to have a wider sphere of experience, to share more burdens, to do more work, to take part in more responsibilities, that is the real blessing of power."

Listen again: "Because Christ had all things put in His hands, He did not draw off in seclusion or make a wall of privilege behind which He might shelter Himself, but every element of His power our Lord used to bring Him nearer to men and to share more of their lives. How differently we see men act in the world, often, who have some unusual ability or strength or means or position! How instinctively we see some men use their advantages to shut

themselves away from their fellow men! Almost the first thing that occurs to the man who has met with some rare fortune, or won some marked success, is that *now* he will not have to endure any longer; *now* he will get away from this or that irksome duty. It is the constant peril of all culture that it tends to take men away from the great human needs and sympathies of life."

Surely, it will not be so with you. Surely, in these days, when the splendour of service and sacrifice has hardly ceased to shine in men's eyes, you will feel the call as men never felt it before—the call to the educated to share their knowledge with the ignorant; the call to the cultured to make life cleaner and truer for the masses; the call to the privileged to share their privileges with the oppressed and the struggling; the call to the well-equipped to use the tools of life in work for others; the call to those to whom much had been given to count their gifts as held in stewardship for service.

The educated man is a debtor to the community. Is he not the most dishonourable of debtors if he sits idly by, expecting that some day the claim upon him will be outlawed?

VI

THE PERIL OF AN EMPTY SOUL

St. Matthew 12:43-45: *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*

THERE is an unearthly solemnity in the words. They fall with a measured weight. We feel ourselves in the presence of great spiritual facts. We are under the pressure of serious, solemn realities.

It all comes home to us as we try to picture the scene. There are the disciples about Christ. Down at His feet, looking up into His face, is the man who has just been healed. Crowding close to them is the curious crowd, all anxious to catch

Christ's words, to see what further He will do. And He stands, with unseeing eyes, a far-away look in His face, His glance not meeting theirs; but gazing out beyond them, out upon a scene of which they are as yet ignorant. Then He speaks. His words describe a conflict in the spiritual world. An evil spirit, expelled from a soul, wanders here and there seeking rest. After a time, he returns to the soul from which he has been cast out. He finds the house of the soul cleansed, swept, set in order—but empty. And because the home has no tenant he enters in, with seven of his companions, and takes up a permanent residence, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

We know how true to life the description is, though we see only the outward part of a struggle whose spiritual significance Christ pictured. Some one we know is possessed by an evil spirit, the spirit of drink, or lust, or sloth, or anger, or envy. By a splendid effort, through God's grace, whether acknowledged or not, the evil is thrown off. He thinks the victory is won. But it is not. Something must take the place of the old sin; some new grace must spring up to bear fruit and fill out the life

and give the mind occupation, or else the temptation comes back with redoubled power.

A drunkard is sent to some institution and discharged cured, his friends suppose; but, in a short time, the sin has him in its grip again and he falls lower than before, his degradation complete. Why? Because there was nothing to take the place of the old vice, nothing to fill out the life. And without that there could be no real cure.

That is the point here, then. It is not enough to cast out sin; something must take its place. We cannot be simply negative Christians; we must be doing something of positive good, or all our life long we shall be in peril.

This is the spirit of Christianity, and it is one of the things that differentiate Christianity from every other religious system. The Mosaic law said, "Thou shalt do no murder." Christ advances upon that. It must no longer be negative; it becomes positive. We must love, or we shall always be hanging on the verge of sin, cherishing hard feeling that may at any moment break out beyond our control. Confucius said, "Never do unto others what you would not have them do to you." What a tremen-

dous advance in moral teaching there is when Christ puts the precept, not negatively but positively, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

And yet how far short of this the ordinary Christian thought runs! How often have we heard people say, "I have never done any one any harm"! As if that were the Christian ideal! Suppose that nothing more than that could be said of Christ, would the world be worshiping Him today? He went about doing good. His was a life of positive deeds. And with us it must be the same. It is dangerous to have it otherwise. For unless your days are filled with positive acts of goodness, active kindness, unless the inner life is maintained by acts of devotion, continued and regular prayer, the soul will be empty, always inviting the attacks of the tempter.

Mark the point then. The peril of an empty soul; the danger of a merely negative goodness; the weakness of a religion that is satisfied at trying to kill vice instead of nourishing virtue. Let me put the idea into two practical suggestions:

First, your thoughts. What does the mind naturally turn to in those free mo-

ments when you are not compelled to think of other things? Thoughts of ambition? or scraps of praise? or anxieties? or grievances? or dislikes? Or, if not these, bits of scandal, or gossip, or the drivel and small talk, or worse, that passes current for literature and conversation in these days? Ah, fill out some of your leisure moments with thoughts that you will be glad to have with you always. Do you remember how St. Paul said, "Whatsoever things are true, are honest, are just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things"? He did not mean that we must always be reading our Bibles, or prayer books, or Sunday-school literature and religious tracts. What he did mean was that we should fill out our leisure time with things worth while. Why do people gossip, except it is because they haven't anything really worth talking about? Read something of real value. Fill your minds with the best thoughts. Then you will have something to fall back upon in times when the brain is tired and work has ceased; better yet, your mind will be stored with the things that are worth keeping for the time when the shadows of life lengthen, and the evening comes, and the

busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is nearly over and your work is done.

"Do not think," wrote a great preacher of a past generation, "that what your thoughts dwell upon is of no matter. Your thoughts are making you. We are two men, each of us, what is seen and what is not seen. And the unseen is the maker of the other." Begin with your thoughts, therefore, because as you learn to control and direct them you have got hold of a silent, working force that is all the while making character. We have been learning again, in these days, that revolutions never come suddenly. That outburst of passionate hatred which broke forth in the Bolshevist reign of terror in Russia had been long prepared. Through all the years men with hate in their hearts had crept among their fellows, like a vine whose branches twine in and out and finally clutch and grip and tear asunder the strongest walls and barriers. Through all the years, men had dropped words of passionate protest which fell like sparks and smouldered here and there till a sudden wind fanned them into irresistible flames. Our thoughts are like that. They are a constant, silent growth; they form the tremendous power of habit;

they make or ruin character. And the only way to make sure of the larger growth that issues in character is to be sure of the seeds which lie in the soil of the soul. The fire never spreads when the sparks are stamped out. Yet we do not stop at stamping out the sparks and drawing away the dry rubbish; we plant the field and cultivate the healthy growth; we fill it with moist life as well as clear it of the dead and dry twigs and branches.

Not only your thoughts, but your actions. Have a heart full of warm affection for somebody, a mind full of genuine interest in something. Count that day lost which does not see some act of kindness, thoughtfulness, courtesy, consideration, however small it may be, done for others. The best way to avoid evil is to be so busy doing good that evil finds no place of lodgment in the life. You cannot *pull* sin out of your heart; you must push it out by getting something else in. You cannot make progress in the life of religion until you learn that goodness is positive, not negative. Christianity is doing the right, not merely abstaining from the wrong. We never stand still in the Christian life; we are growing better or worse. Just merely to

stand idle at the parting of the ways is to be in danger. It is not only the right thing, but it is the safe thing, to become a part of some other man's life, his hopes and fears, his joys and pains.

You may call it, if you will, spiritual preparedness. For a long time after the war broke out we talked of the tragedy of unpreparedness. England was blind to the danger so near. France felt the nameless terror that lay crouching at her doors, but was all too unready to ward off the attack. Belgium was so innocently trusting. America, even after two threatening years, could not be aroused. How wisely and gravely we talked of what *should* have been done, and yet how stupidly we fail to see that there is need of spiritual preparedness, if the enemy of the soul is not to find free entrance! He does not rashly attack the heart that has its fortress guarded. The thief does not enter the house where everybody is at home and wide awake.

Do not think I mean only personal kindness. The thought goes deeper than that. It used to be said that a really healthy man must have a hobby. There must be something in which he becomes so keenly interested that he is kept from nervous and

physical breakdown. There is no interest like a spiritual interest to keep us safe; and the happy heart is the heart that has a larger outlook on the great things of life. Little deeds of good-will are not enough in these days, when so many social problems loom large, and something more than a mild radiation of personal good-will is necessary if these problems are to be solved. The real Christian forgets all about himself in his interest in the Kingdom which is so much bigger and more important than himself.

Indeed, anything less than this is so selfish that it cannot possibly challenge faith. No wonder men will not come to church or kneel at the altar, when all we have said to them is that they must make their own salvation secure by prayer and patient alertness to temptation. Ah! no. Tell them that the call is to enter a brotherhood and establish a new social order; tell them you want their help in establishing God's rule over every department of life; tell them that they are to save their souls by losing them in service; tell them that religion is not morbid introspection and a self-centered desire for personal salvation but that it is a ringing challenge—a summons to rise above

individualism and remember that we are brothers all and sharers of one another's destinies—tell them that and you have a challenge that cannot be evaded; more than that, you have an inspiration that thrills one into life.

That is a part of what we mean by the modern religion of social service. It reminds us that we are not merely saved *from* something, hell, or whatever you want to call it; nor even saved *for* something, heaven and all its delights; but we are saved *to* something. The first duty of the Christian is to serve. That duty lies at the very heart of the religion of the Christ who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. The Church should inspire service; worship must strengthen for service. Unlike the Sabbath, which closes the week, Sunday begins it. It is not simply a day of rest, it is a day of worship, a day of renewal. Christian worship sends us out with a quickened spirit, a fresh vision, a keener desire to serve. We go out to live for God and to labour for men, and we come back from our work hungry. Then, when we have been fed, we go out again to serve and to labour. That is service. And *social* service—what is that? It means not alone the saving of the indi-

vidual and work for the individual; it is the saving of society and work for the community. It means interest in everything that makes the individual what he is.

And all that is of the very essence of your Christianity, if it is to be a positive thing that will save you, as well as save the world in which you work. It has been said that most religions have to do with the individual and his God, but Christianity demands *three persons:* God, yourself, and your brother. Your religion, then, is a religion that thinks of others—and *does something!*

Because it is that sort of a religion it makes you forget about yourself and your own poor little soul. Not altogether, of course. We cannot drift into goodness without thought and without effort. Growth is achieved by decisions of the will, and we cannot decide without reflection. Growth begins when we start anew and start aright and stop our old blunderings. We must think about ourselves, therefore; discover the cause of the old blunders, find out the best way of breaking up old habits and putting an end to old sins.

Yes, of course. Only, when we have done that, we cease worrying over the past, and rise up to be doing; we move towards

the future. The only way to get rid of an evil past is to make some sort of a good future out of it. We cleanse the soul and then start to give it new occupants. "Let the dead bury their dead. Do not sniff at the evil thing. Do not stand to look at the corpse. Go and get a breath of fresh air and then move on about your business."

Ah! you do not know what happiness there is in this positive religion. You do not know how many people are waiting for the blessings you have to give. You do not know what a ready welcome, what heartiness of friendship, what quick responsiveness, await the man who "loves folks" and wants to be a friend and helper. And you do not know how safe that all makes you. With a life full to the brim with that sort of work, there is no room in the vessel for the waters of bitterness. Be a man of the type I have tried to picture: a man with a passion for helping people, a man of radiant kindliness and good-will, a man who shows sympathy and understanding, a member of the fraternity of God. You will be a ray of sunshine to others and at the same time you will find your own heart full of sunny peace. Cleanse your soul, of course, but then open its windows and let the breezes of heaven

blow through. Open its doors and let heaven's guests enter. All other occupants, then, will be frightened away.

Think, then, of the joy of a full life. But think first of the peril of an empty life. The empty house! How pathetic it stands! It may have been swept, cleaned, set in order; but if it is tenantless, the dust and the rust settle down, and grind in, and mar its beauty, and destroy its usefulness, and bring it to desolation and ruin. Pathetic, too, infinitely more pathetic, is a vacant life. Consider the danger of the empty soul.

VII

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

St. John 1:19–23: *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may return an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.*

"NEVER mind about me. It is not myself that matters, it is my doctrine. Forget all about me, and listen to my message."

That seems to be what the Baptist meant. Not much like some of the popular revivalists of to-day, is it? They have no qualms about publicity. They are ready enough to tell all about themselves. You see their pictures in the papers and you may read all about their personal habits and their family history. They live in the limelight. They

drink at the fountains of public adulation. They can no more keep out of print than the idol of the movies. Both look for press-agents of agile minds and quick resourcefulness. The Jordan preacher was not like that. He did not count his crowds. To him it was more important that one soul should be all on fire with God than that a whole city should be aroused and curious.

Yet the crowds came. They saw a strange preacher—a young man, strong, spare, browned by the desert winds, dressed like a hermit in rough clothes, with a look in his face as of one who in his wilderness vigils had held converse with God. The people flocked to hear him. Everybody in Jerusalem talked about him. In the market-places and in the temple courts, in the camp of the Roman guard and in the palace of the king, he was the one topic of conversation. Those who came to hear him found him a stern, sober, serious, passionate preacher, who never minced his words and seemingly knew not what fear was.

The interest and excitement grew apace. All classes of people wanted to see and hear the hermit-preacher. In his audiences were the quiet earnest few who mourned the sad decline of the nation and looked for the

promised Messiah who should restore again the kingdom. In the crowd were plain people of the city, whose hopes he aroused for the dawn of a better day, whose hearts beat high at his denunciation of social wrong, whose faces looked up into his with the light of enthusiastic approval, much as people of the same race, here in America to-day, and men of other races with the same social longings, listen eagerly to enthusiasts speaking in the public square about social wrongs and their remedy. And there were sinners who listened, notorious evil-doers for whom his words had a sting, as well as others whose hearts he aroused to a sense of their own unworthiness—they listened as he spoke seriously of serious things, bade them prepare in their souls for the coming of the King and told of Him as the Lamb of God who could take away the sins of the world. Roman tax-gatherers were interested, too, and asked how, despite the unpopularity and hatefulness of their profession, they could find a place in the new order that he declared was coming. Even the rough Roman soldiers, who came to scoff, remained to pray and to put their question, "Master, and what shall we do?" The whole city poured out to the Jordan banks—some of

the representatives of the ruling classes, the scribes and the Pharisees, among them—and at last the ecclesiastical authorities felt that the time had come for investigation and sent a delegation to interview the revivalist. They came with their questions: Just what are we to expect of you? What is the substance of your teaching? By what authority do you deliver your message? What is this rite by which you receive your converts? Why do you baptize? What are your claims? Who are you, anyway? Do you claim to be the Messiah?

And he answered—honest, loyal, faithful, truthful soul that he was—he answered quickly, "No, I am not the Messiah."

What then? Are you the prophet long foretold, who comes as a second Moses to deliver us?

"No."

Are you Elijah, the prophet?

Again he answered, "I am not." There is an apparent conflict here between the Baptist's reply and our Lord's statement that John was in truth Elijah who was to come; but Jesus is merely repeating what the angel announced to Zacharias, that John should go before the Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts

of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. The Jews looked for an actual return of Elijah, coming again in the flesh in like mysterious fashion as he had disappeared. John, in his modesty, would hardly have said even what Jesus claimed for him; certainly he repudiated any such claim as the Jerusalem delegation inquired about.

Well, then—the questioners continued—who are you? If you are not the Messiah, nor the promised prophet, nor Elijah coming back in power, who are you? We must go back with some report to those who sent us to investigate your claims and your authority. What shall we say? What have you to say for yourself?

He answered, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." I am a messenger, a herald. That is all. What do you care about a herald? You think more of his proclamation than of himself. I am just a cry and a call. Never mind about my personality; listen to my message. It is not myself that matters; it is my doctrine. Is that true, or is it not? Is it of earth, or is it of heaven? The message, not the man,

should concern you. Listen to that and judge it.

That, partly, he meant, but more than that. They were looking for the old prophet in miraculous form, giving sure evidence of the truth of his message—they wanted a sign. They were always asking for a sign and they were never to have it. The prophets, with their "Thus saith the Lord," did not depend upon miraculous accompaniments of their message; the truth of what they said must prove itself to the heart and appeal to the conscience. Christ Himself never gave the sign they demanded. If His life could not convince them, nothing could. Nor would the Baptist win his way by showing them such marvels that all men, good, bad and indifferent, could not but see in the portents the evidence of his authority and the truth of his teaching. No—I am only a voice, a fleeting cry. You may hear it or not. That rests with you. Close your ears and your hearts if you will. Listen—and it is a call that will echo in your inmost being; a searching voice to reach the secret places of the heart.

It is in this way that the Christian message comes to men still.

Take the last point first. Men still ask

for a sign; proof that God exists; that He is a God of love; proof of Christ's divinity; certain evidence of revelation; a clear definition of Biblical inspiration; demonstrable proof of sacramental grace—such signs men ask to-day.

We can never give them what they ask. God always leaves room for faith. Were the sacraments lifted before us luminous with such miraculous light as to compel acceptance, there could be no such thing as faith. The Bible cannot bear upon its pages the bold unassailable evidence of its inspiration. There are difficulties about it and there always will be. Yet it speaks through the still small voice. It "finds" men who are anxious to know God. It answers and corresponds to the deepest needs and highest aspirations of the heart. Christ Himself will not force faith. (It was the devil's suggestion that He cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple into the court below and compel belief.) The proof of His divinity is in His character. That cannot be explained in human terms alone. It shows Him to be more than the highest product of the human race. If there is in us nothing that can be so charmed by goodness that we are moved to

compare ourselves with Christ and argue upon the consequent discovery we make, then I know of no way in which we shall ever have evidence of Christ's divine nature.

So it is with all religious truth. God will not *make us* accept anything. We have free wills, and we can always stand up to Him and say, "No, I will not." Were He to give us such a sign as would make unbelief impossible, He would be violating the nature He gave us. We must open the way to faith ourselves by hushing the heart. Silence all other voices and listen attentively. Tread softly. Do you not remember how, in time of anxiety, you have waited for the sound of a footstep? At last it is heard and with tremendous relief you welcome the visitor and ask for the message you have anxiously awaited. "Be still, then, and know that I am God." I believe that no one ever earnestly took that attitude in religion and failed to get God's message. Remember that you are waiting for a voice—just a fleeting cry, a call, a whisper from God.

Once more: we preachers are but the instruments through which God tries to reach your heart—very unworthy instruments, not always giving the message clear.

We must forget ourselves in the thing we say; but you must forget us, too. Never mind about me—the thing that I preach, is that true, or is it not? Never mind about other members of the Church—it is Christ we preach, not His faulty followers. It is true, indeed, that Christianity may be judged by its fruits, and woe to us if our lives give the lie to our faith. Therefore our personal life *does* count. But our failure does not disprove Christianity; it simply shows that Christianity has rarely been tried.

Perhaps some one cannot give it full acceptance, because it seems to him, however beautiful, an impractical and visionary ideal which nobody ever can put to the hard test of actual living. In that case, he may rightly charge his unbelief to those unworthy Christians who have professed to be followers, but have never actually sought to turn their creed into character. That, however, is not the situation as we usually find it. To most of us, it is evident that Christianity has been given trial often enough to prove that it does work. To most of us, for that very reason, the inconsistencies of Christians are really a proof of Christianity. Were it not divine, the unworthy lives of

so-called believers would long since have driven it to the death.

So, then, forget us and think of our message. What is that?

It tells of a world in sin and in need of salvation. Have not the events of the last few years made sin appear as never before in all its horror? And have not such of us as ever take time to think, discovered within ourselves the seeds of a like moral disaster? Now, if ever, we are in a position to understand that sin is more than "an unfortunate slip, a foolish mistake, a grave misfortune." Now, if ever, any man who takes stock of himself knows that sin is a grievous reality, a deep-seated moral disorder due to the deliberate setting up of the human will against the will of God.

It tells us of a Saviour who came to give Himself in sacrifice for the world's sin. However difficult it may have been in other days to accept the idea of vicarious suffering, it surely is easier now. Has not the experience of four years and more of looking into the agonized hearts of men taught us that we could never believe in any God save one who could enter into the world's sorrow? And has not the voluntary sacrifice of the millions of brave men and women

who have given their lives that civilization might live, has it not made the Christian doctrine of vicarious offering seem all of a piece with our own experience?

It tells us—this gospel—of a Christ who came down from heaven to reveal God. Was there ever a time when such a revelation was so necessary? Had I not been a Christian believer, I should have been near to madness during the darkest hours of the world conflict. Ah! how we needed, then, the assurance that God is like Christ and that this world, however much of strain and stress and pain and terror there may be about it, is indeed ruled by divine love.

It tells us of a God who is not merely kind and benevolent, a loose, lax, easy-going deity who shuts his eyes to evil, but of a God of majesty, severity and righteous wrath—a God like Christ in His goodness, but like Christ also as we see Him in the Book of Revelation, His eyes a flaming fire, His feet like burnished brass, His face shining as the sun, in His mouth a sharp sword of judgment. Was there ever a greater need of such a revelation? Have we not longed for overwhelming assurance that God is Master of Nations and King of Kings; that "the Lord sitteth above the

water-floods and the Lord remaineth a King forever;" that there will be a day of judgment when men shall be summoned to stand before His throne?

Once more, it tells us—this gospel—of the certainty of a future life. Thousands who had given little thought before to anything but the life of this world have been forced to face facts in the dark years of war and have asked, in agony of longing, whether there is another world, where sorrow and sighing are done away and there are no more tears. Does it mean nothing that here is One who Himself came back from the grave and assures us that He has gone to prepare a place for us, that where He is there we may be also?

It tells us of the Master's life, purer than finest gold, strong in service and sacrifice, as He takes the field in behalf of every threatened virtue, never swerving a hair's-breadth from the path of duty, never faltering in allegiance, never failing in affection, utterly unselfish, never weak, but brave, strong and large-hearted, walking the way of truth and right, though it led to Calvary and the cross. Can you imagine any character finer and truer? Can you think of any life in which you find, in such full per-

fection, every virtue we possess and every victory won and every thought of holiness, as His alone?

Finally, this gospel tells us that we must sink self as He did in serving others and that if we will start on that road to faith there is abundance of grace in store for us to strengthen us on our way. Do you know of any other course that will bring surer happiness? Have we not had in this generation an awful spectacle of the end of selfish ambition? Have we not had shining examples of the splendour of service? Does any other system than ours offer strength to reach the standard of life He set before us? Does any even set forth such a standard for us to attain?

This, then, is the message. Think about it. You have heard it so often, perhaps it has lost its power for you. Go back home and weigh it well. Before you try to think it out, get down on your knees and ask God for light. Then read the first fourteen verses of St. John's gospel. Then read the seventeenth chapter. Pray again, and when you have prayed, listen. Concentrate your soul for one-half hour on Jesus Christ. Think about Him till He becomes more than a shadowy shape. Listen for the voice of

God. If He speaks, try not to miss a syllable of the message. If He seems to give no revelation, wait for Him, till He does come into your heart. Remember that in every age there have been men and women who were Friends of God, who knew how to speak to Him and were certain that He answered. *You* can be numbered in the company, if you will. You may never be free of difficulties or doubts, but you can be sure enough of God not to worry over what you once considered insurmountable obstacles to faith. Try it and see. Listen for the voice of God.

VIII

THE ROAD TO FAITH

1 Corinthians 15:19: *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

WHY? Because, to put it bluntly, and in a figure which we moderns cannot fail to understand, it would mean that they had risked all they had in a foolish investment, which had turned out badly and left them bankrupt. When a business corporation is forced to close its doors, the people who own its stock or hold its bonds have an intense interest in its affairs; we who have nothing at stake are only mildly curious about the receiver's report. This, then, was a matter in which St. Paul and his fellow-believers had everything at stake. They had given up all that men hold dear for the sake of a future in which they believed and if by any chance their faith were mistaken they were indeed most miserable. They had risked all and had lost all. They were credulous fools

who had made a silly blunder and were missing all the prizes of life because of their mistake.

Of course St. Paul does not set forth the statement by way of argument. There *is* an argument which he presents, but it has to do with something other than Christ's resurrection. The apostles never argued about that. They stated facts. They were witnesses testifying to what they had seen, not counsel for the defense presenting the case to judge and jury. This statement of St. Paul's is a challenge rather than an argument—a challenge bold and uncompromising. The apostle was contending with certain free-thinkers of gnostic tendencies who regarded the resurrection of the dead as an absurdity. "How," they asked, "how, we should like to know, are they raised—these dead? By what process are their bodies revived? And with what sort of body do they come? A dead man's body decays and perishes and goes back to the earth again. Resurrection of men once dead? It is all pious nonsense. We cannot believe it." Apparently the objectors had not reached the point of denying Christ's resurrection. Whether the flush of their first faith had not wholly departed and they could not go to

such lengths; or whether they thought of Christ as superhuman and in His case did not feel the same difficulty about a bodily resurrection, one cannot know. What they said was that the resurrection was past already: and what they meant, apparently, was that there had been a resurrection in the case of Christ, but one could not believe in it in the case of men whose bodies were mouldering in the ground. The thing was absurd.

It is this point that St. Paul argues, not the fact of Christ's resurrection. What was it, he asks, that I preached to you? What was it that you believed during your first days of faith? I preached the good news which I myself had received, that Christ died and was buried and rose again. On that rests all our faith. Now, then—if Christ became man and died as man and rose again as man, how can you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? Either He rose and so shall we, or if we cannot rise, neither could He. He was man and His experience was typical of ours. It is a plain and simple matter. Faith in His resurrection and in ours live or die together. You cannot disguise the issue by any ecstatic raptures. It is a question of

fact. A risen and triumphant Christ as the pledge of a risen humanity yet to be—it is that, or nothing.

Then comes his challenging climax. Ah! but Christ *is* risen. There can be no denying that. We know it too well. We all saw Him—Cephas and then the Twelve; more than five hundred of the brethren; after that James; then all the apostles; then myself. You cannot move us there. We know. I do not argue—so the apostle seems to say—I know. Now *is* Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of those who sleep. He became man; lived our life; died as we die; was buried; rose again in His human nature; in that nature ascended and now dwells with the Father. Because He lived and died and rose as man, we shall rise, as did He. He is the first fruits of all who sleep in death. As the wave-offering of the first ripe grain of the harvest is the symbol and pledge of all the crop yet to be gathered, so the fact of Christ's resurrection is the assurance of our own.

The power of the apostles' preaching lay in their assertion of positive knowledge of facts. Their faith was grounded in the absolute certainty that their crucified Master

was still alive. If there is anything on earth beyond controversy it is that the disciples of the Lord believed with all their hearts that Jesus Christ had risen. They were as sure of it as they were of their own existence. And they were just as sure that His resurrection was a pledge of their own. Therein lay the wonder of their message. The empty tomb opened the grave and gate of death for all. It satisfied the one great hunger of the human heart, the desire to know of a surety whether there is another life and whether those we have loved long since and lost are lost only for a while.

Jesus Himself never argued about the fact of a future life any more than did His disciples. Why argue about it—is not argument a terrible trifling to human hearts sick with their loss? He did not explain difficulties—how could they be explained when there is no language of human experience in which to phrase the explanation? He did not give details—when all is said, of what importance are these by comparison with the great fact itself? He simply took for granted that death is a mere turn in the road to eternal life, because God being what He is and man being God's child, it could not be otherwise. He filled men's hearts

with trust in a heavenly Father. He made them understand the real value of human life. His teaching, therefore, fits with singular ease and aptness into our modern ways of thinking. With us, any belief in immortality must rest back upon God's moral character. Once we accept that, life beyond life is undeniable.

The resurrection of Jesus simply made assurance doubly sure. All that He taught of immortality was confirmed when He Himself was shown to be alive. Death did not end all for Him; He did live beyond the grave. We, too, therefore, are immortal; for us also there is another life. It was this that the apostles proclaimed with triumphant boldness.

Now—to get back to our text—St. Paul says that on the strength of this faith they had been willing to stake everything. That is why his words are a challenge, clear, sharp, direct, decisive. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Why? Because we have believed it so certainly that we have ventured all that men ordinarily count precious for the sake of the future. We believe so confidently in the after-life that we have invested our all in it. We have given up

everything here in the expectation of gaining everything there, and if by any possibility that which we believe is not true, we are poor, silly visionaries, who have wasted our time in a will-o'-the-wisp chase. We have pursued shadows and spent our all in the sport and now we are powerless and penniless, with no hope of the reward we expected. We had nothing to win in proclaiming the Lord's resurrection—nothing here. But we have not cared for the things here; we have been looking forward to the things beyond. Let death come, if it will—we have believed it to be the entrance into larger life. Let persecutions pursue us—what does it matter? We shall suffer for a little while here, but we shall live forever in a glory that is to be. That is the way we have felt, and on that theory we have acted. If we have been in error, there are not to be found in all the world people as befooled and pitiful as ourselves.

I wonder if we shall not find, in a side glance at St. Paul's dilemma, the real reason for much of our weakness of faith? Turn his challenge around. Because you believe something, you live accordingly. Well, then, if you begin to test out truth through life, may not that be the royal road by which

you get to the reality of the truth itself? In other words, the path to faith is through fidelity to truth. If you act as if a thing were not true, you soon cease to believe in it. Once you begin to live the truth which theoretically you have accepted, it becomes warm and pulsating, sure and certain. The spring and source of our faith in immortality, then, will be found in the willingness to live true to all that immortality implies. Are we doing that? Are we acting as we should expect men to act who are reasonably certain that life does not end at the grave? On the contrary, are we not acting as if this life were everything? Here is the remedy for doubt. Practice the fact of immortality and soon your faith in immortality will grow. Suppose we try to live for truth and goodness, not spasmodically but first and last, and all the while. To do that is to live in the supernatural realm; and the more we try to fashion our lives after the spiritual order, the sooner will our faith in such an order be quickened.

During war days it was most illuminating to see who stood firm in faith. People who had been frankly selfish and heedless, caring for little but the gratification of their own desires, were loud in their complaints about

the God for whom (if we may judge from their actions, without being wholly uncharitable) they cared little or nothing. Those who had always been Christians of high purpose and splendid character rarely failed in their trust. They saw with reasonable clearness through the dark clouds and in the deepest affliction never seemed to lack hope and consolation. As some one very truly said—I wrote it in my note-book at the time, but failed to note the author's name—" One of the most wonderful things in life is the way in which comfort comes to the heart that is stayed upon the highest. Despair and unselfishness are mutually incompatible. When disaster comes, dreadful as it may seem and terribly as it may hurt, if you have been trying to meet it on the very highest level of faith and courage, something—call it what you will—presently invades your soul and gives you peace and assurance of coming good."

Newman has a sermon on " The Ventures of Faith," which will always live in the hearts of those who have read it. If by any chance, he asks, Christianity should prove a false hope, its promises of life an iridescent dream, what should we have lost irretrievably? Imagine the whole Christian

structure of truth and practice tottering to its fall, the whole beautiful scheme laid in ruins and we ourselves standing amid the wreck and overthrow, how much the worse off would it leave us? Have we risked so much, ventured so far, committed ourselves so deeply, that we should be engulfed in ruin? If Christianity were proved a woeful mistake, we should be disappointed, of course, but should we be of all men most miserable, with everything gone, because everything had been invested in the enterprise; with all lost, because all had been given up for this hope? Donald Hankey defined religion as "just betting your life there is a God"; that is, risking something for your belief, staking something on it—making religion the great reality.

The apostles made this venture of faith, because they believed that they were treasuring a secret so rich that the world had not a price big enough to buy it away. We shall have the same secret in sure possession, only as we are ready to make the same sacrifices and live by the same rule. There are people to whom the resurrection-life is perfectly sure and certain, because *it has already begun in them.* That is the pathway to faith for us. Try to live like Christ and you

soon come to believe in Christ. Practice the fact of immortality. Our weakness of faith is the result of our manner of life. We are so immersed in the things of this world that we paralyze the senses by which we become conscious of the other world. Something more than an annual Easter service is needed to revive our dormant faculties and make it possible for us to believe. Our faith is largely in our own hands. It rests with us whether we shall strengthen or dissipate it.

So: practice the fact of immortality. Live as if you believed it. If you live as if this were the only world there is, that is what it always will be; nothing else will ever be sure for you. The time will certainly come when this world, with all its charm, will prove a very disappointing world and you will cry out for vision to help you to see through to another. Open your eyes now!

IX

ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS

St. Luke 24: 29–35: *And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

WE cannot understand the power with which the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of their Lord unless we realize the dark background of discouragement and despair against which their new faith now stood so clear. One of the strongest proofs of the Easter story is the fact that it was finally accepted and passionately believed in, despite the

first skepticism of the disciples. They were not a credulous people, these followers of Christ, always on the lookout for marvels; they were plain, hard-headed, sensible folk, not easy to convince, just the sort of people who insist on facing facts. They all doubted, for a time, the evidence of their own senses. One of them, Thomas, never did accept the resurrection of his Master, until he had received overwhelming proof of it. Nor were they in any mood to expect the resurrection. After the crucifixion, they had given up all hope. This tragic end of a career to which they had committed themselves, heart and soul, left them with nothing to which they could look forward. They were utterly stunned. They had gone through a human experience surpassingly wonderful and suddenly everything had come to a hopeless ending. There they were, in the upper room, like men who had been lifted up to the highest heaven and were now dropped down into the lowest depths. They were dazed and depressed, stolidly and stupidly despairing. They knew not where to turn or what to do.

Then something happened to change them. What it was, we learn in part from this story of the walk to Emmaus.

Those two disciples, leaving Jerusalem on that Easter afternoon, to go back to their home in the near-by village, were stunned and bewildered, just like the rest. The story of their walk is told so naturally and simply that it bears upon it, in every sentence, the mark of truth. "In the bewilderment of first bereavement, they talked drearily—of Him, of His great life, of His piteous death, of all that was precious and all that was confusing to them in His history; of the failure of His purposes, of the ruin of their hopes and of His." As they were walking a stranger joined them. They supposed him to be one of the thousands of pilgrims who had come up to Jerusalem for the feast. He asked them why they were so sad as they walked and talked and apparently they were a little annoyed at his ignorance. Could it be that there was any one in Jerusalem who did not know the things that had come to pass there in the last few days? Was he some foreigner sojourning in the holy city and unaware of the one thing that made this passover season different from every other? They began to explain about it all. It was impossible to think or talk about anything else. But soon he took the lead in the conversation.

Their eyes opened in wide astonishment at the things he said. Very quickly they threw off their lethargy and listened breathlessly. The whole tangled story seemed to become plain. Their dull despair gave way to wild hopes. New courage came into their hearts. The talk was so interesting that before they knew it they were at their own door and the stranger was saying his farewells and starting down the road. Then, suddenly, they aroused themselves, clung to him, begged him to enter and share their hospitality and tell them more. When, at their urging, he had entered the room, it seemed quite natural that he should recline at the head of the table and say the simple blessing. As he took the bread and blessed it and gave thanks their memories ran back to the story of the Lord's last night with the twelve apostles—*they knew Him;* but hardly had they recognized Him when He had vanished out of their sight. For a moment they looked each into the other's face; in one breathless sentence they told each other how their hearts had strangely burned within them as He talked with them in the way; then they dashed out of the house and down the road and back to Jerusalem—you can almost hear the quick patter of their

sandals as they run down the road—and in a little while they were back again in the upper room to tell of the Christ who was alive again. There they found the rest with their own excited story of other appearances, and while they were yet speaking the Master came again.

The narrative has the sure mark of truth stamped on it. The strength of the resurrection story lies in the fact that all the disciples went through an experience similar to that. They were all plain, ordinary, every-day people, honest and sincere, who, when Christ died, gave up hope and felt that they were at the end of everything, and then, like these men, underwent a swift transformation from dull despair to radiant faith.

Do you want the same radiant faith? Well, the experience of the Emmaus disciples may show you how to get it. Let me take three points of the story:

First—they constrained Him. Could you imagine their allowing Him to go off down the Emmaus road without an effort to hold Him? And can you not see that if they had not made the effort He would have passed on without giving them the revelation? They clung to Him and besought Him.

"Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent." It reminds us of Jacob wrestling with the angel. "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

Most of us take our religion very casually. One would imagine that the knowledge of God was the easiest possible thing to secure. We expect it to trickle into our minds, as it were, without any effort on our part. Yet God reveals Himself as we seek to know Him. There must be on our part earnestness of desire, intense enough to counterbalance the multitude of other desires which conflict with it. Our real trouble is usually just this, that we have never started on the quest for God. If it were a matter of business we had to thresh out, or a legal tangle to be straightened, or a professional problem to solve, it would be quite evident that the only sensible way to go about it would be to pull ourselves together into an attitude of sharp attention and concentrate the whole mind upon the matter till we had thought it out. Why will we not see that the same effort must be made to put oneself into vital union with God? Most loss of faith is a slow growth. It creeps on through days of neglect and indifference; it can almost always be traced

to slothful neglect. Through our own fault faith is frittered away and when it is gone we bemoan its loss, utterly unconscious of the fact that the failure is due to our own indifference. God is always willing to reveal Himself, but He simply cannot make Himself known until we do our part. At Emmaus Christ waited for the two disciples to prove their earnestness of desire. They "constrained" Him and then there came to them the revelation of the Risen Christ.

Again—when the dull eyes were opened and the revelation came, how was it given? "He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread."

It is not enough that faith should be formed—it must be sustained and fed. And Jesus left us the service of Holy Communion for this purpose. In *A Spiritual Pilgrimage* the Rev. R. J. Campbell, once pastor of the City Temple in London, tells with frank sincerity and utter self-forgetfulness the story of his gradual change of faith and practice. He came to understand that sacraments are not substitutes for personal religion—they are divinely instituted aids to the realization of God's presence.

Both Protestantism and Catholicism have great secrets of power. The former

brings us to our feet, challenged to action: the latter brings us to our knees, seeking strength. We must learn to combine the two. Never has the call been more clear for eager service; never, therefore, has the need been so great for warmth of devotion. The mistake of Protestantism is that it has exalted preaching at the expense of worship. We must make our churches something more than lecture auditoriums; they must become houses of God, special places of prayer and devotion. We have made public worship too cold and formal, too bare and barren, something that appeals in the main to the intellect. Here we have that which makes it appeal to the heart and stir the emotions.

Religious workers in army camps and at the front discovered that there was just one service which had wonderful popularity with the men, wonderful power and impressiveness. The service which always took hold of men's hearts was the Lord's own service, the Holy Communion—that service which commemorates the world's great sacrifice, the Calvary tragedy that ended in the Eastern triumph. The men always showed that they loved it. They could not tell why, but love it they did.

The Holy Communion is easily the most intelligible and popular of services because it is the most appealing and dramatic. It is more than that, it is intensely human, because it is communion and fellowship with a Lord and Leader. It means also that in loving fellowship with others the Christian is pledged to try loyally to embody in his life the personality of Jesus Christ. A soldier (and a layman) has expressed it in this way: "The object of Holy Communion seems to be to symbolize the two ideas which lie at the root of all Christianity: that the Church is the Body of Christ, and that the members of the Church are members of Christ. The Master is to come first in his life to dominate it. The Master's work is to be his work, the Master's ideal to be his ideal, the Master's spirit to be his spirit. In so far as in him lies, and in coöperation with all men who love his Master, he is to try to reproduce the life of Jesus Christ; and in so far as he really tries, Jesus Christ helps and strengthens him. There at the holy table the Christian realizes in a moment all that his life is meant to be, and all the forces which are ever ready to help him." At the altar the Church's worship reaches its fitting climax, so human is this sacrament, while

yet so divine; so human, for the gift is hidden under natural signs and veiled as being too bright for mortal eyes to gaze upon; so divine, for its mystic power is ever ready to burst into a flame of glory. "Surely, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

The tragic blunder of Protestantism is that it has substituted much preaching and a little prayer for the Lord's own service on the Lord's own day, even as the tragic blunder of Romanism is its fatal emphasis on the sacrifice of the mass at the expense of communion. The deepest appeal of the Lord's own service lies in the fact that it is a feeding on Christ; its moving power comes from the fact that this is done in obedience to the dying request of a loving Friend who expressly asked that we should "do this in remembrance" of Him. At any rate, however we explain it, the fact is that our obedience to the request of this Friend proves to be the way by which we come to know Him. One cannot understand why the service should have been so neglected. Is it because frequency of celebration, it is feared, may detract from the solemn character of the feast? Yet no one would dream of

praying only at rare intervals, lest prayer should lose its reality by the frequency of its repetition. Here, then, is a means by which to make our faith secure. Could we expect it to be safe when we forget the one request of the dying Lord?

Finally: Will it seem far fetched to see in the hurried visit of the Emmaus disciples to their brethren in Jerusalem a call to service? Was it not significant that, once they were assured of the risen presence of their Lord, these two men did not dream of the possibility of keeping the good news to themselves?

There lies the secret of friendship with God. We find the Divine Friend in service. With most of us our thoughts are so centered on self that it is little wonder we cannot realize God. The moment we rise out of self and walk the way of human helpfulness, we find God. Possibly it is because we cannot live unselfish lives without Christ and when we try to be like Him He comes to our help. Possibly it is because when we begin, like Him, "to go about doing good" we grow into moral likeness to Him and that makes it easier to know Him. However we try to explain it, the fact is there.

The road to Emmaus may symbolize, therefore, the road to faith.

First, make religion more and more the business of life. Do not be a dilettante Christian. Take faith seriously and earnestly. Belief in a risen and ascended Christ means that we will know no other standard of life than His. Accept the standard and belief will follow.

Second, even when you are in doubt cling to the corporate life of religion. Keep on feeding your heart. Thomas, the first honest skeptic, made a terrible mistake when he forsook the fellowship of the other apostles. Had he been with them on the first Easter Sunday, he would have found faith sooner and would have been spared that week of agonized anxiety and dark despair. Especially, seek faith in Holy Communion. Do not stay away because of doubt and difficulty. There are people in the Church—and we know it is right that they should be there—who are moving very slowly towards a better moral life. Why should there not be those at its altars who are groping towards a surer faith?

Third, make your life a life of service. Be one of these who try to make the Church itself a home of service. The Church's

mission does not end with a proclamation of pardon or peace; nor is it to be only the administrant of sacraments of grace. The Church has social obligations and a prophetic mission for this present time. Be one of those who help to guide the Christian forces of the nation in making thorough application of the principles of the Gospel to the needs of to-day. That will make the Church what Christ meant it to be, the nucleus of His Kingdom. It will make *you* what Christ meant *you* to be. It will increase your faith. As you learn to live like Christ and try to make the world His world, doubts will vanish and difficulties be less insistent.

Mazzini said that "Christ bent over the dead corpse of humanity and whispered three words, Love, Self-sacrifice and a Heavenly Origin, and the corpse awoke to life." They are the three words I speak to you: A heavenly origin—the remembrance that earthly things are only transitory, a means to an end, and that end God. And what is that, but an appeal to make the really big business of life its important concern for ourselves. Love—and where shall we learn this more quickly than in the sacrament of love, in fellowship with and re-

membrance of the Elder Brother? Self-sacrifice—what is that but readiness to give oneself for others, and in giving to find God? As we practice these we rise with Christ into newness of life. Seeking the things which are above, we believe with surer faith in that life where Christ dwelleth, "at the right hand of God."

X

THE SENSITIZED SOUL

St. John 16:7, 13: *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.*

IT was expedient that He go away, because otherwise His ministry would have been localized and limited, necessarily confined to one section and to a few people. That is plain enough. But why did He say, "It is expedient *for you* that I go away"? It must have been hard for the disciples to see that. Indeed, we know that it was hard. That last night, in the upper room, they were so confused and puzzled, so utterly dismayed, whenever He spoke of His approaching departure. Were He to go now, His ministry would be incomplete, its ending premature. It was simply unbelievable that He could leave them, when there was still so much for Him to do and for them to learn. And they needed Him so!

A wave of discouragement passed over them at every mention of separation.

Yet, with Him there was no such feeling of incompleteness. Had He remained with them, they could never have acted for themselves. They would never have dared to try their wings. Nor was that all. He was content to go, because He had done for them all He meant to do.

In His dealings with His disciples our Lord seemed to be occupied with two things. First, He was making them feel their need of God. One of the striking things about the ministry of Christ is the gladness with which He accepted the most rudimentary faith, if only it were genuine. He saw such faith, not as it was, but as it would be. If only the desire for God were awakened, He could be content. So, one by one, the disciples felt their need, one by one they came under the spell of Christ and capitulated to Him. They gave in to God, surrendered. They found God and they said, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed." Their experience has been repeated in many lives since. Are you restless and dissatisfied—with your work, your income, your position? Does it not come over you, sometimes, that at bottom you are really

dissatisfied with yourself? You are restless for God. He is making for you the Great Suggestion: You need Me. You have never actually faced the situation and so you do not know the reasons for your own discontent, but you need Me.

Now Jesus Christ made men feel this great hunger of the heart. That is the first thing He did. And then, second, He sensitized their souls. He not only made them feel their need of God, but He made them susceptible to God. He left their souls sensitive to the divine guidance. His work was to prepare their hearts for further movements of grace. For this He taught and trained them—agonized over them—and then it was to be the great work of the Holy Spirit to lead them into further truth and give them fuller revelations and open up for them new paths of service. Under His guidance, then, they would gain courage to walk by themselves. The moment Christ was sure that they were susceptible to God in this way, He could leave them; not only *could*, but *must*. It was expedient for them that He go away.

Once the heart is fixed and once it is sensitive, we need have no fear of the future. All our doubts may not be an-

swered, nor all our fears satisfied, nor all our problems solved; we may still see through a glass darkly. But there will be no real uncertainty in our faith. These things will be things of the mind, not of the heart, and we can believe and be brave, though we cannot see clearly. Of course you cannot tie up a man's mind, but you can root and fix his heart. Christ's purpose for His disciples was to make them feel their need and so hold fast to God, and then to sensitize their souls to the Spirit's further teaching.

In chemistry we employ certain "re-agents" to detect the presence of other substances by producing a reaction which proves the purity of the "base" with which it is combined. The soul must be like that —a re-agent by which conduct is tested. In photography we sensitize the plate that it may receive impressions from without. The soul must also be like that—sensitive to truth and right; to duty and goodness; susceptible to God.

Perhaps you will let me change the figure and say that the man of the fixed heart has certain root principles which govern his whole life and because he is also a man with a sensitized soul he makes such fixed stand-

ards the test of all his actions. I wonder if you have ever taken time and thought to discover the leading motives of your life, the springs or fountain heads of your conduct? Is not the real failure with most of us that we meet life's duties in a haphazard sort of fashion? In each circumstance of life, we decide on the spur of the moment, without clear insight, certainly without a first care for consistency, what we shall do. Every one of us ought to have certain root principles, fixed, firm, immovable, by which every action can be tested, out of which each can be seen to grow naturally.

Some years ago, finding myself out of sympathy with the editorial policy of a magazine on whose staff I held a position, I went to the editor to discuss with him the problem of our future relations. I shall never forget the patience with which he went over the whole subject. The immediate cause of disagreement was brushed aside and he said: "Never mind details for the present; let us see whether we are in substantial agreement over fundamentals. What are the basic things you hold to be absolutely essential? What are your root principles?" We never did succeed in agreeing on a policy and I found myself unable to work for the practical ends he had

in view; but I owe him a debt of gratitude to this day for forcing me to go back to first principles. He made me set forth to myself my settled convictions and compelled me to discover just where I stood and why I stood there.

Something like that we must do in life. What are the things you most surely believe? What is it that for you is beyond debate? In morals, what are the settled convictions from which you will never permit yourself to be swerved? In faith, what are the large truths which nothing will make you give up? In business, upon what have you fixed and determined as the course you will always pursue?

How many of us can name these things? Have we a sort of moral platform, with its several planks, as parties had their political platforms in the old days? It would be an illuminating thing to read down into your life and seek to discover what you stand for and are really working for.

Having such principles, your heart will be fixed; more than that, your soul will be sensitized; it will respond quickly in testing truth or conduct.

Your heart will be fixed. You will never be a timid soul, always fearing the loss of faith. I had a letter the other day from a

frightened woman who was very much disturbed over certain proposals made in matters of practice in the Church. "In these days," she said, "one does not know where one stands." I told her that psychologically that was a cowardly thing to say and that the mere saying of it was a grave hurt to her soul. We ought to know where we stand; at any rate we must not allow ourselves to grow panicky about our footing. There are multitudes of matters in faith and practice about which people become hysterical which cannot by any possibility touch a robust faith. The history of the Church is the story of "crises" that never materialized. And the history of Christianity is the story of successive discoveries and systems that seemed to imperil the faith and yet have either long since been forgotten or quietly accepted without any loss of essentials. If I am sure of my foundations I am able to strike a happy medium between the mental attitude of the man who clings desperately to everything and the man who prides himself on the fact that he holds to nothing. I have rooting, and therefore I dare have outreach.

You would be ashamed of me, would you not—I should be utterly ashamed of myself—if I preached the same sermons I

preached five or ten years ago. I could not deliberately shut my eyes and stop my ears against all the changes of thought that have come in religion, as in everything else, during the last decade or so. If, for example, I preach the social gospel of the age, it is because the cry of to-day is for such a social religion and I find it in the old gospel, though perhaps a quarter of a century back I was so busy looking for something else that I could not see it. New aspects of the truth are always coming into view; new interpretations are ever appearing, often with the force of a new revelation. It has always been so. St. Paul's gospel was the same as St. John's, yet it had a different setting. St. Luke and St. Matthew tell the same story, yet one is full of the social spirit and the other is not. The gospel for America is the same as the gospel for France or England; yet it must be so presented as to meet different needs. The gospel for the twentieth century is the same gospel that was preached in the first century—but with what a tremendous difference of emphasis! Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, but the yesterdays looked to Him for help in other problems than those with which the to-morrows must wrestle.

The point I am making is that the man of

the fixed heart *knows* where he stands amid all these shifting changes of thought and the man with the sensitized soul *grows* with the growing world. Just as with each new task, each separate decision, you ask, if you live by principle, "Does this tally with the things for which I mean my life to stand?"—so, with each new proclamation of truth or proposed practice, you ask, "Is this consistent with the things that are really essential? If it seems not to be, have I perhaps been in error as to what I supposed to be essential? Are there things of which I am so sure that I need not be fearful in examining into this which is new and seems so startling?" You have a soul sensitive to guidance; not dull to new impressions; a fixed heart, but an open mind.

When to the Blessed Virgin there came the announcement of her selection to be the Mother of the coming Messiah, she asked, "How can this thing be?" It was not the question of unbelief. It was simply the prudent inquiry of a heart which desired to see how the new vocation was to become consistent with the former self-dedication. Hers was the reverent inquiry of faith and so she received the answer to her question. Zacharias, on the other hand, asked in doubt, and was stricken with dumbness

until the Lord's promise had been fulfilled. With reverent faith also, the man of the fixed heart is asking with regard to each proposed duty, "How shall I reconcile it with all the obligations I have already incurred?" As to each new belief he questions, "Is it consistent with the faith of which I am now absolutely certain?" He does not swallow down as true every new thing in religion; he tests the new by the old, and though open-minded he is not ever running after new fads and taking up new religions which he just as quickly lays down.

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will guide you into all truth." Let us have faith to accept that promise, with clear understanding of the fact that we are living under the rule of the Spirit. If we keep our souls sensitive, new truth can be printed upon them.

And the same is true of new duties. Indeed, after all, new truth means new duty—how do we test alleged truth but by seeking to discover whether it will work? Of course that is not easy. It *is* easy to accept anything as pure theory. I can readily say that two and two make four, because I am

not obliged to do anything because of my acknowledgment. Were I among those first asked to accept the Pythagorean theorem, I would surely have rejected it, had it involved my joining Pythagoras in living on a diet of beans! Spiritual truth is the only truth that makes moral demands upon us. If I accept it, I must try to live true to it. And there comes in my primary religious obligation: to *think about* my religion; ask what its fundamental principles are, ask what they involve, make every action of my life square with these general motives, keep my heart open to new duties and new obligations. Why, for the matter of that, the souls of the disciples *could* be sensitized, just because already they were doing something for themselves in looking for the new revelation. The disciples were "religious men seeking a new experience." The Pharisees were men whose faith was merely a dried-up acquiescence in dogmas from which they had ceased to expect experience. Just because the apostles were men who were constantly testing the truth of their religion, they were led to Christ, in whom all the religion of the past reached its climax and fulfillment. Like them we must be men with fixed hearts, yet with souls wide open to the light. Like them we

must feel, below words and symbols, an eternal verity on which we may draw and in whose power we may push on towards the more abundant life.

If you have been patient in following thus far, you will let me take time to add two practical words:

First, as to conscience. Often we drift into carelessness of life, because, so we say, we are not offending against the voice of conscience. We are quite right in saying that the man who never disobeys the voice of conscience is safe. To put it the other way and say that we may do what the conscience does not forbid is dangerous. The conscience may have been deadened. It may lack sensitiveness. It may have been habitually silenced. To say, I *must* do this, I must *not* do that, because my conscience so directs—that is altogether different. A conscience so obeyed becomes sensitized to truth, responsive to duty, keen of insight, susceptible to God's guidance, an instrument of His Spirit. And so there is no graver sin possible than deliberately to silence the voice within. We must obey its every warning. Once to have the conscience speak, and then to refuse to listen, means a heart less sensitive to truth and to God.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Till all this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love
And do what Thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with Thee I will one will
To do or to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with Thee the perfect life
Of Thine Eternity.

Finally, I wonder if you will be interested in a preacher's telling you how to listen to sermons. Patiently and with resignation of course—you are quite ready for that advice now!

But, seriously—are you not often disappointed in sermons because they take you nowhere? I am. They seem to lack practical point. They are indefinite and general. You want to be told just what you should do, just how you can make use of the truth you have been taught, exactly how

you can apply it. Sometimes you do get momentary impulses of good. You go away vaguely impressed and uplifted. But you feel that the sermon has not fitted you, individually.

Well, it seldom can so fit. Possibly it was not meant to do this. It was intended to sensitize your soul. The real preaching of the sermon must be done by you as much as by the preacher and that happens when you go home and in quiet, alone with God, yourself ask what this truth should mean for you. God the Holy Spirit will guide you, if you will ask Him. He will lead you into all truth. If you are depending entirely on some human teacher to tell you precisely where your line of duty is, your spiritual life will never grow. It is only as you surrender yourself to God's guidance and let Him show you what your duty is that your development begins. The reason so much preaching fails is often—not from any serious fault of the pulpit, but because the sermon is never taken away outside the four walls of the church. Alone you must brood over it, ponder it, weigh it, and ask what it says to you. The danger of sermon hearing is just the danger the apostles would have succumbed to, had Christ stayed with them always in the flesh. He was not to

stay, because it was expedient for them that He go away, leaving them with sensitized souls into which truth could enter and find a ready reception, but leaving them to work out their own plans and mark out their own paths, because independence of action is the surest means of growth.

Is not the failure of the sermon quite as often the fault of the pew as of the pulpit? Our fathers remembered texts and sermons as something of vital worth, not because the preaching of that day was better than the preaching of this, but because the listening was so much better. The congregations were made up of people who had more or less yielded to a pervading religious ideality which gave character to their thought, moulded their daily attitudes and activities and prepared them for farther realizations of the divine. Their souls were sensitive. Make yours so. Try for yourselves to see visions and dream dreams—to picture spiritual facts and in the power of the vision to give embodiment to spiritual ideals. Cultivate the "hearing ear" and the "seeing eye." Incline your ear to the parable. Listen to God—not simply to the preacher. God is indeed a living God, and He speaks to living souls.

XI

THE SANCTIFICATION OF EVERY-DAY LIFE

ZECHARIAH 14:20–21: *In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.*

EVERY other nation save Israel had its golden age in the distant past. Back, far back in the centuries, lay their greatness. It was different with Israel. Back in its past, too, were days of glory, as we know from the Bible pictures of the founding of the kingdom under David and of the splendour of Solomon's reign. But the summit had not yet been reached; not yet had they climbed the heights that would shine with luminous glory. A greater than David was to come. The glorious past was to be wonderfully surpassed in a future day of splendour. They looked for another King, before whom the kingdoms of this world should crumble, till

they became the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. They had no pathetic and pitiful backward looking into the past; their eyes were fixed on the future. There lay their golden age. There would be their real glory, their power, the consummation of all their splendid hopes. They looked for and patiently waited for and hasted towards the day of the greater Prince of the House of David. For them there was "one far off, divine event, towards which the whole creation moves."

So, line by line, their prophets drew the portrait of the promised Messiah, the Divine Prince who was to come and take up His power and reign. And, line by line, here a little and there a little, they sketched also the picture of the messianic age, the new era when the Anointed One should appear in glory. They loved to dwell upon it, to picture its peace and prosperity, its spiritual strength, its reign of holiness. They were statesmen, these prophets of old, not merely visionaries, and their proclamation of the Kingdom was a call to the nation to save itself by walking in the ways of God instead of trusting to doubtful alliances with other nations. They were preachers of righteousness and their message was a sum-

mons to men of their own day to serve the truth and the right. They were optimistic, healthy-hearted, undiscouraged believers, who never ceased to hold faith in a God who was working His purpose out and however dark the times in which they lived, however unfavourable the outlook, never ceased to believe in the coming day. Their God was King and eventually He would reign. Evil had within itself the seeds of its own disintegration. It had no abiding power. In the end the just should live through his faithfulness. There is nowhere in history such an exhibition of faith as theirs. They make pessimism a religious impossibility. They are a standing protest against loss of hope. They make it of the essence of Christianity that we shall believe in the ultimate victory of right. One cannot read their utterances and be darkly doubtful. One cannot give up and slip back and cease to struggle, with them as an example. There were never darker days than those in which they lived and never brighter hopes than those to which they pointed through the clouds. They believed in a world always growing better and in a God who always raised up men to save His cause and advance His Kingdom.

The picture of the messianic day was not painted by any one of them alone. Each added a touch to the canvas. Each drew some of the lines that made the portrait of the King take permanent form. Each put his touch of colour into the painting that showed the age that was to be.

Zechariah here is adding his bit to the sketch of the messianic age. In that day, he says, the very bells of the horses shall bear the inscription, "Holiness unto the Lord." The vessels of the Lord's house shall be like the sacred bowls for use at the altar. In that day the very household utensils shall be stamped, "Holiness unto the Lord of Hosts."

What does he mean? Plainly, that Christ's advent would bring with it the sanctification of every-day life. Henceforth nothing was to be common or unclean; all was to be sanctified by His use and dedicated to His service. Common things were to become holy, because all life was to be His; all work would be done for Him; all men and all things consecrated to His use.

How wonderfully the prophecy was fulfilled in the Incarnation! The Son of God was made man—as human as ourselves in everything that is of the essence of human

nature—perfect man, with a human body, a reasonable soul, a mind with every true human affection. Because He so perfectly took our humanity to Himself, He made it a new thing. Work, business, pleasure, home, have become different because He touched them. Because the Incarnate Son once lived in a home, with other boys and girls, because He was a citizen, a member of the community, a workman, therefore family life, social life, business and community life, have been touched by God and, in time, will be bathed with the glory of heaven.

The lesson of the Incarnation is so simple and practical that it seems hardly necessary to state it and impossible to believe that for so many generations Christian people never learned it.

Yet they have not altogether learned it even now. Religion was long regarded only as a preparation for a life to come, not as the interpretation of the life that is. The Church pointed out the path to heaven, instead of training men to walk the ways of earth. The essence of the spiritual life was a longing for the paradise beyond, not the earnest desire to make this world a paradise here and now.

Take business, for example. Men not only acted as if it had nothing to do with religion, but openly declared that the two could not be made to mix. Of course, business men ought to be religious. A man cannot get on without religion, any more than a society leader can get on without a dress coat. But, like a dress coat, religion was for use on special occasions. Men separated their lives into compartments, one for religion, another for domestic life and family relations, another for social life, still another for business and a last one for politics and the larger affairs of the world. The compartments were almost water-tight, and even though religion trickled through into the family compartment or the social compartment, very little seeped through into the compartments of business and politics.

That is not the Christian conception of life, of course. The religion of Christ is the religion of every-day life. It tells us that all of life must be penetrated and permeated by the Spirit of God. Our Christianity is abortive, defective, insincere, if it does not enter into every part of our life. Your daily work, in the light of the Incarnation, has become your ministry, your vocation,

your calling. You are "called" to it just as truly as the priest at the altar is called. A man's business or profession used to be spoken of as his "calling" and it is a pity the word has fallen into disuse. Your daily work is your means of manifesting Christ. As you go about each task you are, or should be, a Christ-bearer.

What a homely, commonplace lesson that is to preach at Christmas-tide! And yet it is a lesson never to be forgotten. Christianity, if it means anything, means that religion has to do with life, not merely with certain sacred performances. Men who are Christian men cannot worship in church on Sunday and the next day squeeze a business associate dry. We cannot think to have unblemished Christian reputations so far as our church relations are concerned and yet have no different standard than the men about us, in business or politics. It must be seen, some day, that those who worship Christ as their incarnate Saviour cannot sink to the level of the world when they step outside of the church doors. Possibly the worldly man may be forgiven his sneer at religion, in days of a not very distant past, when four out of every five men who had engineered some doubtful business

deal, or stood behind some bit of corporation crookedness, or winked at some flagrant piece of political bribery, were at the same time members in good standing in Christian churches, officers in Christian Sunday schools, leaders in Church synods and conventions. We have begun to move beyond this compartment conception of religion now; standards are higher, ideals nearer those of personal life—but there is yet a long road to travel before self-seeking shall be banished from business and industry as we recognize the obligation to banish it in domestic and social relations.

No; Christianity was meant to penetrate all of life; the advent of the Son of God was a coming into every human interest, and the religion of Jesus Christ is not something for Sunday but for all days, not something for the Church and the home and pleasant social relations but for the business place, the counting room, the legislative hall, the primary and the polls. The religion of the Incarnation must mean, if it means anything, that when we know a man to be a Christian we can know him also to be square and straight in all his dealings. If he is an employer, we are glad to work for him because being a Church member, we

are sure he will be fair. If he is of the employed, we are ready to give him a first place in hiring men, because the mere fact of his Christian profession means that he will do his work as well as he can. If he is a business man or a lawyer, we are ready to trust him, because we are sure he will pay his debts, we know he will be honest and straightforward and aboveboard.

If, as a matter of fact, we cannot always act on this principle, it means that the religion of too many Church members is not really the religion of the Incarnation. It is a refined paganism, a sanctified ceremonialism, a modern phariseeism; it is not the religion of the God who came down from heaven to tabernacle among men.

The lesson is so simple that we may deceive ourselves into thinking that it is easily learned and practiced. Of course it is not. Nothing really worth doing is easy. Jesus Christ never meant to make life easy. The discovery of duty and the serious effort to perform it is not easy, but it moulds character and it makes men.

In business, as we all know, it is not always easy to be honestly Christian and yet succeed. Men are hampered by conditions not of their own making. They face compe-

tition and competition is not always fair. They are anxious to increase wages and improve living conditions and reduce the hours of labour, but rivalries make it seemingly impossible. The splendid thing is that in our day so many men see the difficulty of it and yet see that they must try to solve difficulties and do the thing that is right.

There are two ways of facing the question of religion in business. You may say that a business man cannot really practice Christianity in business life, and so it is best to stay out of church and make no religious professions. Or, you may say that the Christianizing of business is a splendid ideal and you will do your best towards its realization. Thank God, there are business men to-day who are working towards making the ideal an actuality. The splendour of the task appeals to them. The greatness of the service calls them. They see that this is indeed the Christian ideal and they see that their real calling in life is to do their share of service in bringing in "the great day of the Lord."

And they have seen, too, as by a new revelation, that religion in business means not merely individual righteousness but

corporate righteousness. There was an old legal saying that a corporation has no soul. Now it is known that a corporation has as many souls as it has constituent stockholders. The great sin of American business life had been sin at long range. Perfectly good and sincere men and women, of religious faith, owned stock in corporations or were directors in such companies, without giving one moment's thought to the way in which the money was earned, so long as they drew their dividends regularly. They were sinning at long range. But sin is sin, no matter how far back we travel to reach it, and responsibility cannot be evaded by doing through others what we never would dream of doing ourselves.

May I, with outspoken frankness, remind you that many of the industrial disorders which trouble us to-day have their roots in the ugly past when sin at long range was more wide-spread than it is now? Some of you are impatient at the attitude of labour towards capital in these days of readjustment. You are trying to get the machinery of normal production running smoothly and it seems to you that labour is selfishly and stupidly throwing obstructions among the cog-wheels. Remember that the faults of

labour to-day are the outcome of the sins of capital in the not very distant past. And remember, therefore, the special duty which lies upon you to redeem the errors of other days (and, it may be, of other men) by earnest effort towards sympathetic understanding of the labouring man's position. Of course he is not an idealist moved by purely altruistic motives; he is sometimes a prejudiced agitator, conscious of injustice, by no means sure that you are moving towards a remedy, determined to secure power and more than make up for the past, knowing his power and not yet using it unselfishly. The sins of other men are responsible for much of his passionate purpose. The only hope for him, as well as for yourselves, lies in Christian patience and forbearance and persistent brotherly purpose. Together you must solve the problems of reconstruction. Here, at any rate, there must be "peace without victory," if peace is to be permanent and industrial warfare be ended.

We usually think that we put Christianity into our every-day affairs when we practice the virtues of justice, honesty, prudence, temperance, integrity, courage; but it is not enough to put these things into business,

because the cardinal virtues of Christianity are not simply these; the essential Christian virtues are faith, hope and love.

Faith in God? Yes, but not only that, faith in your fellow men, faith to believe in humanity, faith to believe that ordinarily the purposes of most men are straight and true; faith to believe, employer and employee alike, that the other man is honestly trying to do the best he can—faith in men. And hope in heaven? Not that only, but hope for the Kingdom of God that is coming here on earth. No longer are we talking to-day about a heaven towards which men are moving as along a road, without any concern for the scenery they are passing, or any consideration for the people who are travelling the same road with them. Religion, now, means making this world just as much as possible like the world towards which we move. So our hope is hope in the coming Kingdom of Heaven on earth. And finally, love. Love for God? Again, not that only, but love for your fellow men —the kind of care and thoughtful consideration which makes the employer do all he can for his men and makes the men try to understand the employer; the kind of real consideration that makes the employer give

service without creating the suspicion of condescension; the kind of sincerity which makes the employee banish suspicion and cease to look for ulterior motives. That is the kind of love I mean—love for men and confidence in them and consideration for them as part of God's family.

So we shall not have taken the last onward and upward step in Christianity until we have made religion in business more than the introduction into our industrial life of integrity and all the other natural virtues, but somehow have put into it, out of our hearts, faith in our brother men and hope for what is true and just and right and charity one for another. That will be doing our part towards the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy of the day when all life shall be sacred and every human task hallowed.

This is my Christmas message for you men.[1] It is simple, but it can never be commonplace. The Incarnation is the sanctification of all human life. If all of our life is not being more and more sanctified by our faith, there is something wrong about our faith, however dogmatically correct may be our statement of it. Better—a thousand

[1] The sermon was a special address given at a service for business men.

times better—a halting, stumbling, imperfect belief, with the believer honestly trying to incorporate it into his life, than the most correct orthodoxy, and the life and the creed things separate and apart. Just because Jesus Christ, in His incarnate life on earth, touched every department of human activity—just because of that, the man who shuts his religion into one day of the week and one compartment of his activities, is not really a believer in the Christ the Church was sent into the world to preach. The religion of Christmas is a religion for all of life—or it is no religion at all. Let us honestly face that fact. You have too tight a hold on Christmas to give it up, have you not? Well, then, tighten your hold hard enough to make the meaning of the story come true.

XII

THE MANLINESS OF CHRIST

St. Luke 9:43: *And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.*

THIS is only a sample text. There are dozens of passages in the gospels just like it. They emphasize what has often been forgotten in the study of our Lord's character. They help us better to understand what this brave, strong, manly Friend and Brother really was.

What was the human secret of the extraordinary influence which Jesus Christ exercised over His followers? Humanly speaking, what was it which so seized upon them, that they left all and followed Him? The answer is beyond dispute. To quote one who has given us the most illuminating of modern interpretations of the Christian character: "The immediate effect of the teaching of Jesus was an effect of power, of authority and mastery, the compelling impressiveness of a leader of men. It is the note of strength. His ministry was dynamic, commanding, authoritative. His

dominating trait is force. He has the quiet consciousness of mastery, the authority of the leader; for softness and sentimentality, such as characterizes 'the feminine man,' there was no room in His rugged, nomadic, homeless life."

Professor Peabody, whom I quote, shows how this impression of mastery confronts us from whatever side we approach the life of Christ. We see it in the ethical aspect of strength and in the intellectual aspect of the same quality of power—"a strength of reasoning, a sagacity of insight, an alertness of mind, which gave Him authority over the mind not less than the will." I want you, this morning, to think of the masterful Christ in a plainer, simpler way. I want you to think of His quiet consciousness of power as that of a Man who held sway over the souls of others by the force of manly personality, simple, strong, honest, courageous, true.

The other day some one sent me a magazine article entitled "Introducing Jesus Christ." It told of the manliness of the Master. Perhaps some of us really do need the introduction. For centuries we have been learning many things of Christ which are indeed true and never to be forgotten,

but which make up only one element of His many-sided character. We think of His tenderness, His gentleness, His meekness; we know of His love and His long suffering; but we like to be introduced to the Christ who was Master of men and held all the vital forces of a complete manhood in reserve for any emergency. Jesus Christ was the "Strong Son of God" and the thing which first drew men to Him was His power, His forcefulness of personality, His commanding strength.

This is the side of our Lord's character which must be emphasized if His religion is to appeal to men to-day. When I read the story of Calvary, I like especially to think of the soldier at the foot of the cross who was won to faith as Christ died. He was Longinus, so tradition says, a centurion of the Roman guard, detailed to oversee the arrangements for the execution—a rough, plain man whose mind did not turn naturally to spiritual things, who had known little and cared less about the ecclesiastical disputes among the Jews which led to the Good Friday morning trial. There he stood, impatient for the end, ready to go back and make his report when it was all over. He had given little thought to what the whole matter was about and he looked

on, at first, just curiously. But whatever else he did not know, at least he knew a man when he saw him, and when he had seen Christ die there awoke in this rough man of battle the essence of faith. "Truly," he said, "this was the Son of God." Christianity is concentrated for a moment on these two men—Christ on the cross and the Roman captain looking on—and when the man whose trade had to do with death saw in the dying man not weakness but strength, no sign of anything save a power that strangely moved and stirred him, Christ won. Longinus, if it was he, became a Christian and was one of the first Bishops of Rome.

I like, again, to look into the mind of the penitent thief to discover just what brought him to his confession of faith. He was possibly a young man who had become a member of one of the insurrectionist or robber bands that infested the country near Jerusalem. As a youth he had been captivated by the bold spirit of the leader of such a band; eventually he had joined his company—perhaps out of pure love of adventure, perhaps out of boyish hero worship for its daring leader, perhaps because his imagination had been fired by some tale of social wrong that had made his hero an outcast.

Now he had come to the end of his mistaken career, and he was dying on the cross. Next him hung this fellow Prisoner. He knew something of Christ's claims and had heard of His career. He watched the Prisoner. And slowly he came to see that all his old hero worship had been misplaced. Here was a hero who could inspire his moral respect: courageous, but large-hearted as well as brave; magnanimous and always bearing Himself in such a big way. Christ excites in him a love and loyalty that sprang from a sense of His greatness of heart and unquenchable manliness. Then the thief saw something more, the power that shone through the Lord's weakness, and in a flash recognized His royalty and passed on to quick faith in His divinity. "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom."

Jesus Christ was so great in every moment of His life, that it is no wonder that men gave Him ready allegiance. His words were always with power. His life was like His words; His death like His life.

There are men to-day who need to be shown Christ in just that way. There was nothing weak or unmanly about Him and there is nothing small or narrow about His religion. He is, indeed, all that we have

been taught to picture Him in His meekness and lowliness. He was the Lamb of God, who patiently suffered for the sins of men. He was tender and compassionate as the gentlest woman. No soldier who reached the hospital ward will wish to forget that all the care he had there is the fruit of Christian love and a reflection of the affection of the compassionate Christ. Yes, Jesus is all that we have been told in His tender pity. He wept at the grave of Lazarus and was not ashamed of His tears. He stretched out His hand and touched the leper, who had not felt the warmth and pressure of a human hand since his loathsome disease came upon him. He went about through the fields and hills of Galilee, a sweet and gracious influence, softening men's ills, healing their sicknesses, soothing and comforting their distress. We think of Him—and rightly—as the Good Shepherd, carrying the lambs in His bosom.

Yes, all of that He was—and we must never forget it. But He had also all the strength of the strongest manhood. He was gentle—yes, but the strong man can always be a gentle man. He was meek and lowly—yes, in disciplined and trustful dependence on His Father. He was no mere quiet visionary, no sadly contemplative

saint. He was, as Tennyson says, the "Strong Son of God." He was called the Master and men called Him such because it was true: He was indeed master of their souls.

The strength of the best manhood is not mere brute force, it is quiet confidence of power. And because Christ was this kind of a man His whole ministry was a ministry of power. That was the reason why men, when they looked up into His face, obeyed. He called them from their homes, their boats, their tax booths, and they gave heed to His mastering call and followed. In His face was strength more than human as well as love divine. If women were drawn to Him with peculiar loyalty of devotion, it was partly because women as well as men are won by masterful personalities. How marvellously He combined all that is best in woman and all that is best in man! He had patient endurance and He had wonderful forcefulness, the power to suffer and the power to defy. He was the one man who has ever combined all the beauty of womanly tenderness with all the strength of sturdiest manhood. In the same hymn in which we sing of Him as "Jesus meek and gentle," we call Him "Son of God most high."

Take a few instances: He is "led as a lamb to the slaughter"; but "He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem"; a man's man, with a man's most splendid courage, facing an all-too-certain fate and facing it with such resoluteness that as His disciples followed they "were amazed and were afraid." He weeps in love and pity over Jerusalem; but in the temple He is terrible, as with His whip of rushes He drives out those who are defiling its courts with noisy trade. He prays in Gethsemane in an agony of emotion; but when He steps out of the garden the crowd of soldiers quail before His stern glance. He is all gentleness to the woman who is a sinner; but He stands face to face with the Pharisees and is unsparing in His denunciation—His words bite and burn and they are flung in the very teeth of the men who have power to drive Him to death. Little children loved to be near Him and were unafraid in His presence; but His message to Herod begins, "Go and tell that fox." Even His opponents recognized His fearlessness: "Master, we know that Thou art true and carest for no man: neither regardest Thou the persons of men."

I would have you to think about Christ's manliness in two or three practical ways.

First, I want you to consider Christ the Man because it makes Him and His religion winning and attractive. The picture of Christ the Man looks so natural. If He was that sort of man, of course He was not demonstrative and gushing—God save us from thinking that mere effusiveness is ever going to attract men to religion—He had dignity as well as strength. Nor, on the other hand, was He narrow and censorious; no true man is. He was not sad and sombre, but natural and spontaneous. He was glad and free, an out-of-doors man who loved people, was genial and companionable, unaffected, fond of the society of His day, meeting people of all sorts in the hearty comradeship of common life, likeable and loveable, genuine, generous, large-hearted, straightforward and strong.

Do not think for a moment that I would have you forget that He is divine. I am trying to picture Him to you as man, not in forgetfulness of His divinity, but because His humanity is the vehicle by which He expresses His godhead, and if we can understand what manner of man He was we shall have new conceptions of what sort of a God His Father is. I have known so many men who have an unconfessed but very apparent dislike for religion just be-

cause they do not admire the kind of goodness they think the Church asks them to admire. They do not see that Christ, with His eager delight in life, with His frank and alert interest in the common affairs of common people, with His buoyancy of spirit, has shown us that we can be good without ceasing to be natural; especially that we can be good without being miserable; and above all, that our God is the kind of a God who is just like Christ.

Two American soldiers recently—so the story runs—were following a guide through one of the great churches of England, when one of them, with an impatient gesture, which would have been comic but for its tragic intensity, flung out his hand as he pointed to the figure in a stained glass window. "Look at that," he cried. "Now you know why men stay away from church. That isn't our idea of the kind of men God wants. Deliver me from the stained-glass saint." The fact is, we have many of us been brought up in an atmosphere of stained-glass religion. From Sunday-school days on, we have been taught of a Christ who is either sombre and sad, or weak and effeminate. Those whom we call saints are pale and anæmic, with wasted form and mournful countenance, their eyes heavy

with tears or weary with watching. The religious people who have been supposed to be models of Christian living are not people to appeal to healthy boyhood and strong young manhood. They are dull, narrow, stiff, conventional, unnatural, without red blood. They have no kinship with the happy sons of the open air. They would never exercise command over us. They have nothing of masterful force. This was the religion some of us learned about in boyhood, but it is not the religion of the manly Christ.

Again: Jesus Christ was such a splendidly fearless man. All the fine things you have ever dreamed of in your own manly hearts, all the qualities of moral bravery that men most admire, you find in Him. His disciples were all of them men of high courage. Indeed, for the matter of that, the good men of the Bible are a line of heroes: Abraham, who went forth with courageous obedience, forsaking family and friends; David, the strong captain and founder of a nation; Daniel, who dared tell Belshazzar the truth; Isaiah and other statesmen like him, who stood for God in the corrupt courts of corrupt kings; the prophets, who "were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the

sword, had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings"—and always stood steadfast. The disciples, once they were endowed with the Spirit, proved themselves men of sublime courage. St. Peter stood before thousands and flung at them his challenge, "Ye crucified the Lord of Glory"; St. Paul reasoned of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come, till Felix trembled on his judgment seat; St. John the Baptist, our Lord's forerunner, boldly rebuked vice as well as patiently suffered for the truth's sake—worthy, all of them, of the Christ who was never afraid and even in His hour of weakness and collapse showed not a single sign of anything that was not strong and courageous and brave and true.

The Church is calling for men like that to-day. Because some of you have thought that the open profession of Christianity makes of you a sentimentalist carrying your heart on your sleeve, you have held back. It does not mean that. It means following the manly Christ. Like Him you will have tasks to do and dangers to meet, conflicts to endure and sorrows and trials to bear; like Him you may have to go through them alone. You come here that like Him you may do all in the strength that comes from God. If to come into His Church you have

to face the amused questionings of some of your friends, come anyway, and show that you have the courage that dares to take things seriously. Above all, come because your coming may put a little courage into the heart of some other man who is trying to make his brave fight, too, and can make it better if you are fighting by his side.

Finally, remember what we started with, that the masterful manliness of Christ is the human explanation of His influence. That was why His word was with power. Have you ever really considered the call of to-day for men like Christ? Have you who are Churchmen considered that people are watching us as they watched Him and that we have the chance to show them the faith by which we live? What a splendid thing, if we could bring to Him just one person who had learned from us how to live in Christ's strength! What a triumph beyond words if some perplexed and doubting brother should first see the light of truth in our faces! How fine to feel that we can have a faith so sure and steadfast that it must reach out and grip some one else and make him strong! What a glory to be masterful men if only we can be masterful in Christ's way!

I suppose the deepest desire in the hearts

of most men to-day is the ambition for power. Not wealth—men work for money only as a means to an end. Not luxury—the men who can buy most are often the men who are content with little. What men want is power. They seek social position, or business leadership, or political place, as an opportunity for impressing themselves on others and making their influence felt. They have the natural ambition of strong and sturdy manhood—the desire to "count for something." So men long for power. There ought to be for them a wonderful, winning attractiveness in the Christ who was a man of power. But is the power they desire the power of Christ and do they want to use it as He used His? There is the question which ought to be pressed home to every man's heart.

Think for a moment of the privilege of power. Lincoln Steffens, in one of his stories, tells how *The Dying Boss* was made to see his real sin and failure in life. He was a man who held a whole city in his grip. He and five other men—a banker, a railroad president, a representative of the public service corporation, a contractor, a manufacturer—sat down together and "fixed things" when any political move of a really essential character was made in the town.

He was unable to see how he could be condemned for his part in the political corruption which followed. Things had to be done, and it was pure "high brow" nonsense to be excessively scrupulous as to how they were done. He wasn't a bad man, was he? He was human, that was all, and he was loyal. Why, for the matter of that, he thought himself a rather good patriot. Had he not put through a lot of public improvements? And had he not saved big business a lot of trouble and made the town prosperous? He was no worse than the mass of people. What was his sin?

The day came when he was dying and he put that question again. This was the answer: You are a natural leader, are you not? Yes. Came of the common people? Yes. A born politician who lived with these plain people and could do things with men? Always. You pride yourself on your loyalty? Yes. Well, there is your sin. You could have used your gifts for your people. You could have made those who were your workers do what you would, once you had their allegiance and loyalty. Your power of personality was a gift with which you might have accomplished great things for the common folk from whom you sprang, who were so ready to follow you

like sheep. And you betrayed them! You bartered your real power for the power of political place. Where have you led those who trusted you? What have you left them?

The privilege of power! The responsibility of splendid manhood! Jesus Christ never forgot that. Now, men are watching us all the while—watching us who are Christians—to see how we use our gifts; whether life is for us a great glory which we never permit to grow dim; whether our talents are a gift which we use for personal advantage or whether we use them in the way that makes the world rich. God grant that as they watch us they may see something that makes their hearts fill with the wonder of the power of Christ!

I do not know where you can better help them to see it than in the company of those who, however sadly they have failed in their task, are seeking to make Christ known to others and trying to have Him rule in their own hearts. Make no mistake about it. The Christian religion is the most virile thing in the world. If you want "a man's job," you can find it in the Church as well as you can find it in the market-place.

XIII

A PLEA FOR THE HEROIC

ISAIAH 2:4: *And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.*

THAT means, of course, that we are to turn into instruments of service all the possessions and talents, material, intellectual, moral and spiritual, which have been discovered and developed during our years of conflict. It means, to use the phrase of William James, that we must find "the moral equivalent of war."

To begin with the lower things, it means that we must discover a substitute for military service as the preserver of our ideals of manhood, something to take the place of "war's disciplinary function." It means that we must rescue the very brute force of war and turn it to new uses. But, of course, that is only the lower part of our task. It was not brute force that won the war; it was a spiritual thing, morale. And so we must find a way of keeping alive and active that splendid spirit which made our

men in France veritable crusaders, dedicated to a great cause, inspired by a great ideal, fighting not merely "to make the world safe for democracy," but to make justice and right supreme and to deliver the world from fear and bondage and give it the glorious opportunity of the full exercise of its free, unfettered manhood.

All that, but more than all that. It means that to find the moral equivalent of war we must seek another outlet for all the high romance which lifts war above the desolate fields on which it is fought. Never has there been a war so hideously ugly as this one now ended; never a war which so revealed the detestable horror of militarism in all its nameless loathsomeness, till the whole world prayed that war might never again lift up its hateful head. And yet there never has been a war which has shown such valiant and glorious self-giving, such clear-eyed vision of whole-souled service. We must find a way never to lose that spirit again. We must find a way of putting at work—here in America, and back in its homes; here in the Church, and in our several parishes — that heroism which seemed to have vanished from the earth, but now for these past years has been flash-

ing out again as "a great glory at heart that none can take away."

Above all, the text means that we Christians must arouse ourselves from our indifference and inertia and lethargy and try to learn the lesson of the high venture of faith. We must find in the call of Christ a plea for the heroic.

We shall see it, of course, if we try to sum up all we have learned in these years of conflict. Early in its history we came to see the secret of the militaristic ambition for world power. Germany had maintained a splendid leadership and rendered vast services in all departments and phases of human life—and then all her talents were turned to this ambition for power. That was what made Owen Wister, four years ago, describe the war as the pentecost of calamity. Step by step with a marvellous industrial, intellectual and social development marched the spirit that turned it all into a curse instead of a blessing. Shape and substance were given to a dream of world dominion, a dominion not simply material but spiritual—the ambition to make the German mind, the German genius, the German character, prevail over all the world. "To this end her poets, her orators, her historians,

her publicists and politicians, perpetually drilled into the minds and hearts of the German people the duty and necessity of achieving this lofty and mighty ambition."

Now what was back of that ambition—back of the ambition whose mad debauchery was a blasting curse moving on its scorching course of brutality and desolation? We traced it to its source and we found that it had a spiritual origin; it was the embodiment of a philosophy of life.

It is not the time now to fling stones at a beaten enemy. We are not a people to deride a conquered foe. And so you will realize that, now the conflict is over, I am trying to get back to the heart of the thing only that we may regenerate its spirit. We want to discover where were the springs of the evil, that we may learn how to make the fountain bring forth sweet waters instead of bitter.

And I do not think it can be denied that the madness of the military fomenters of the great war had its spring and origin in a philosophy — the Nietzschian philosophy that might makes right and that the lust for power ought never to be quenched if we would not quench the very spirit of manhood. Here we found a philosophy

which "banishes self-renunciation and finds life's supreme end in heroism, in the doing of great things." Nietzsche felt himself a man who with arm unafraid was sweeping away the rubbish of a decadent religion. He was clearing the ground of a weak and effeminate belief unworthy of red-blooded men of strength. He considered it a mere illusion and pretty sentiment to expect anything of mankind once we forget to fight. Nothing but the rough energy of conflict had ever been discovered to call out the heroic in men. Without "the soul-shaking earthquake of war, with its utter indifference to loss and pain," a nation would be sure to lose its vitality.

There, then, we found the root of the horror which was twisting us in its ugly arms. I am not speaking of it, of course, to open up old wounds, to rub in the salt now that the wounds are to have a chance of healing. I speak of it, rather, because, now that there is some hope of passion dying out, we as well as those who were conquered have our call to searching self-examination, self-analysis and self-criticism. Ours is no longer the task of accusation and indictment. We have something sadder and more serious to do, now that the tumult

and the shouting are over. We diagnose, once more, the German war disease, only to ask whether we ourselves have escaped infection. In Germany alone had the philosophy of Nietzsche acquired the clearness and self-consistency of a formulated creed; with German system and thoroughness, it had been pursued to its logical conclusion and set in an ordered whole; but are we sure that it was not forming a part of our subconscious thought here in America and among all the nations? And are we sure that the disease is stamped out even now?

We hate war, we are forming a world alliance to kill forever the thing we abhor; but are we sure that our hatred is kindled by the right fuel, to burn in a clear flame? What makes us hate war—the economic waste it has wrought? the æsthetic ruin it has left in its train? the toll of blood and carnage it has charged against the innocent and defenseless? the sorrows with which it has clouded the world? the passions it has unloosed? Is it this alone that makes us hate war? Or do we hate it because it is even more than a pentecost of calamity; because it is the perversion and distortion of the splendid and heroic? Do we hate it because it takes the thing which God gave

us for high spiritual adventure and debases it into a thing beastly and abhorrent? Do we hate it because it does for the spirit what drink and lust do to the body? Do we hate it as we hate the panderer who entices the youth, in his fair boyish beauty, and leads him down the steeps till he leaves him a sodden mass of diseased flesh? Do we hate war, because God meant us to live in the spirit a life of adventure and courage and for centuries war has made us forget this and believe that all courage is of physical combat? Has the time come at last, when we shall beat our swords into instruments of peace, because we have learned who is indeed the happy warrior?

There are two straws by which any candid observer may see how the winds have been blowing in these latter days.

First, will he not see, amid the spread of a purely conventional religion, a disposition to take our Christianity very easily, to lose out of it any high standard of self-sacrifice, to let it evaporate into mere respectability and easy-going content? Are we not all of us—or an increasingly large number of us—wholly unwilling to put ourselves to any serious inconvenience or subject ourselves to any real discipline for the things we are

supposed to believe? There were a few months during the war when it appeared otherwise; seemingly we were willing to sacrifice for a cause and there were hopes that the spirit might permeate all our life. But soon the immediate peril was over, and the high call was no longer ringing insistently, and we rushed back to our old ways, with anxiety to make up for lost time in an orgy of self-indulgence. Was it not the same in our attitude towards things clearly religious? How many of us had learned to stake anything on our faith or risk anything because of that belief in the things unseen?

And then, second, either as the result of this, or as an explanation of it (I shall not stop to ask which), have we not seen the spread of a subtle lack of faith in the Christian ideal? Men have been asking whether the Christian doctrine itself is not all an error? There is a tendency to divide people into two classes—those who utterly lack the heroic and virile, and so are out of the running, and those who have it (or, at least, admire it) but have gained it at the loss of their religious faith. In business, almost as sharply as in war, we have been driven to the point of asking whether Christianity is

in fact a workable, practical system. Has it ever really been tried? If it were tried, would it stand the test? Have you never found questions like these troubling your own consciences: Are the Beatitudes really a workable rule of life? Is the Sermon on the Mount a possible standard of action? Or has Christianity set up an impossible ideal? Does it so stress the passive virtues as to lead inevitably to a poor and thin conception of human nature? Does it not, or if consistently followed would it not, rob us of the splendid and heroic? Does it not inevitably tend to weakness and failure and degeneracy?

In other words, is not the failure to follow Christ due in large measure to a growing disbelief in Christ's program and plan—a disbelief which we have not faced or acknowledged, but a disbelief which is really at bottom only a step removed from the Nietzschian substitute for Christianity, a disbelief which has thrown away one religion and has not yet taken on another, because it has not taken the trouble as yet to examine its own mental processes? We differ from Nietzsche, many of us, only in the failure to think boldly and avow bravely what we feel; only in the indolence which

has kept us from carefully formulating our real faith.

That is the situation which I want to press home to your consciences. And having suggested its searching questions, I want to suggest also a possible answer to the doubt or misconception which it embodies, a remedy for the ill which it reveals. That answer lies in the fact that the Christian character has really been caricatured both by its friends and its enemies. It is *not* a religion purely of passive perfection; it has all that the heart can desire of brave and sturdy endeavour.

The Christian character is two-fold. It has softness and it has strength; self-renunciation and self-expression; it is the two-fold character of the Jesus who was meek and lowly, but was also the "Strong Son of God." Its humility is the humility of Him who could bend to the task of a slave and gird Himself and wash His disciples' feet, just because He was so great, just because He knew that He came forth from God and went to God. The Christian character, in its meekness and gentleness, is the upgrowth of moral greatness; its power is the fruit of its peace. It is rooted and grounded in self-sacrificing love.

And yet—because this foundation robs what rises from it of all self-interest and self-seeking—the Christian character that issues out of this self-surrender, if it is to grow to perfection, must be daring and impetuous, vehement and intense. It is very striking to find how often the inspired writers—yes, the Prince of Peace Himself—bring out this side of the Christian's life. St. Paul bids us put on the whole armour of God and gird ourselves for conflict. We must strip ourselves like runners in a race, every nerve tense, every ounce of energy in use. The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by storm. We are enlisted in a war; more than that, we carry the campaign into the enemy's territory; we capture their bristling trenches by storm. There must be something about our righteousness that "flashes and glitters and gleams; that smites and stings," like St. Michael's sword—St. Michael as he stands in Perugino's picture, "young, ruddy, strong, triumphant, girt with shining armour, belted and greaved, yet swift, ready, and at ease." The Christian, to use Scott Holland's words, is "a soldier as well as a sufferer; he carries a sword as well as a cross; he is perfected in meekness, yet wins to himself the grace of force and courage;

he bends to receive the humility and gentleness of the Spirit, and finds himself gifted with the sword of the Spirit."

Is it not just here that we have failed? Have we not softened and weakened our Christianity and left out the heroic, instead of trying to disentangle the heroic from all that is brutal and boastful? Is it not that we have supposed the Christian life to mean patient submission, with passions subdued and vehemence moderated, instead of learning that vehemence and strength and passion and earnestness must still be there, only liberated and detached from self-assertion and self-seeking? Have we not forgotten that the spirit of Christ is always a challenge to the heroic? What shames us, what humiliates our Lord, what makes anti-Christian cults grow apace, is that we have allowed our Christianity to become so shrunken and withered, so mean and unheroic, so comfortable and commonplace, so little like the splendid self-sacrifice of our Leader. If we are indeed His followers we must have hearts of tremendous purpose, a very passion for righteousness, an intense and burning zeal, an unflinchingly persistent determination to live true to the highest and best, a willingness to do and to dare, to suffer and endure and die.

Let me show you three ways in which we may begin to recover this virile Christianity and put it in the place of the religion that has become so commonplace and comfortable and unheroic.

Take it first in the matter of moral conviction. How many of us are slaves to our surroundings! We do as others do. We are swayed by the crowd. We are swept along by the current. Or, "we insinuate our feeble effort so humbly and weakly that we are brushed aside without hesitation and our action leaves no mark." Yet the spirit of Christ is always a challenge to the heroic in us. He demands moral earnestness, courageous conviction, deep-rooted principles, eager enthusiasms, a passionate devotion to truth, an intense and burning loyalty. And all this calls for a soldier's courage. The cry has gone up from every generation of mankind: Would God it were easier to do right! But it is a mistaken cry. I am never tired of repeating what I once in my earlier days heard a preacher declare: that Christ did not come to make life easy; He came to make men great. Do we fail in moral bravery? Do we lack in the heroic? Is Christianity for us only a veneer of conventional respectability? Or does it mean that we have enlisted for the fight?

Second, there is the way of service. Have we had the courage to see what social service means and where it will lead? How many of us *will* grasp our courage in our hands and follow, wherever it leads, whatever it tells us of industrial injustice, or the limitations of property rights, however deep it may cut and however hard it may hurt?

I hold no brief for any of the modern social gospels; only, I do ask whether there is not a shade of truth in the accusation that our opinions are formed by "economic determinism." Just as in the old days, we were content with a back door charity which doled out relief to applicants who asked in meekness and humility, and never inquired about the cause of poverty or sought to do more than condescendingly dispense a little aid; so, later, we have been content, perhaps, to dabble a little in what we call social service, whereas the cry is now going up all about us for social justice. Have we the courage to study it all out? Have we the spirit of sacrifice which will compel us to see that fairness and right triumph, no matter what the cost to ourselves? Have we even the spirit of Christian sympathy which would enable us to view the whole question from the other man's standpoint?

I saw the other day a recipe for manufacturing Bolshevists. Take a poor immigrant; put him at work in an ill-ventilated factory, doing a machine-like job; let him live in the slum district, with the red-light quarter around the corner; let his wife and children stay there amid squalor and indecency; let profiteers make money by increasing the cost of the food he eats and the clothes he wears; let the police push him from pillar to post because he associates with other people who are under suspicion; and then let him see the rich go by in their limousines, perhaps running down an occasional child who is playing in the street because he has no other playground: do all that, and you have Bolshevists all about you in the making.

Of course you can explain away the picture; it is one-sided, to be sure. But have you had the moral courage to look at that side? Is your religion real enough to make you *want* to see that side? Is it real enough to make you want to do something, if your search shows you many social wrongs you never guessed at before? There are dozens of social problems on which we should be seeking conviction: are we walking towards the light? Despite the silly faddists who make every social reform a joke and them-

selves a public pest, despite the half-crazed street orators who weary us with their hysterical shrieking, there *are* leaders who stress things fundamental and who are wearing out their hearts because they get no help in their effort to right wrongs before the evils they would correct sweep against us in revolutionary passion. What are you doing to understand, much less to help? Down at bottom are you too weak and cowardly to face the things out? Do you run away from them as from fearsome spectres?

Third, there is the way of sacrifice. What are you giving for your religion—of time or money? How many of you tithe your incomes? How many contribute as much to the church as you spend on personal luxuries? How many of you give of yourselves in sacrificial service? The war brought to us a demand for reality. Its demand is still insistent. From now on it will be increasingly impossible to be content with a mere nonchalant acceptance of Christianity. The new day summons us to risk something on our faith, to do something because of it, to show that it is worth working for, worth sacrificing for, if needs be, worth dying for. Those who profess Christianity must be dead in earnest. I am

speaking to you who profess it, and I ask you frankly whether you are taking it all seriously enough to make any one else come under the conviction that it is really worth while.

Ah, is it not because we have dammed up some of the streams of Christian endeavour that all the heroic forces of human hearts have been seeking an outlet elsewhere? Is it not because so little of the heroic is left in our Christianity, that men are beginning to question its vitality? Have we not come to a pass where our first prayer must be for valour, Christian valour, passionate and exhausting persistency of purpose? Have we let a complacent religious respectability supplant Christianity? Will our cowardice rob us of Christ? Yes—surely yes—unless we can swing towards Christ all that is high and noble in ideals and ambitions that are not His. We must beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning hooks—turn into heroic moral endeavour all that is fine and flashing in battle. We must separate the gold from the dross. We must hold fast to the splendid in human hearts, while we take out of it the stain of blood and the curse of cruelty and offer it to the Son of God, that as He goes forth to war we may follow in His train.

XIV

THE GOSPEL FOR AN AGE OF LUXURY

St. Luke 12:15: *A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*

THIS is an age of luxury. Even war, with its enormous drain on the world's resources, has not meant much of hard sacrifice for America. Thousands of business men and manufacturers have become rich over night and multi-millionaires are now too common to arouse more than momentary interest. Almost every one shares in the common prosperity. Wages have risen by leaps and bounds. Save for the clergy, the teachers, and other classes of salaried and professional workers, war, for the most part, has meant money-making. Prices have advanced with wages, but the high cost of living is itself an evidence of luxury. It means that wants have multiplied until they have exceeded

present supplies. People of all classes are buying as they never bought before—dissatisfied with anything but the best; demanding that, whether they have the money to pay for it or not; daily discovering new desires; prices mounting in consequence; wages rising with prices; and all of us engaged in a wild orgy of buying. It is an age of luxury.

It is also an age of selfish ease. The two go together and they always follow war. During the days of actual conflict we submit to a certain degree of discipline, but the bonds of our restraint are snapped as soon as peace comes. The soldiers themselves, especially in a democracy, lead the way. They hate military rule and regulation and with most of them the day of discharge is a happy release from discipline, a quick let-up, a ready relapse into more easy-going ways. The rest of us are exactly like them. Our year of self-denial is followed by a year of self-indulgence; we are exuberantly free-footed as soon as peace is declared. With the strain relaxed, we let ourselves go with a will. Now we all mean to take things easy.

It is more than an age of ease; it is an age of softness of living. Before the war

there had been noticeable a marked loss of moral stamina, a lack of virile hardness, an easy self-indulgence. The newspapers were full of stories about the idle rich and the vicious poor. Even to the most optimistic of us America seemed in danger of losing its soul and we welcomed our entrance into war as a proof that we were not altogether sodden-spirited, though we were undisciplined, sectionalized, uncoördinated and ineffective. We thought the war would change all that, but has it? Hardly. And is the picture too darkly painted? I do not think so.

The evil runs parallel with no special social class. Immoral luxury is by no means confined to the rich. The largest single expenditure in America, before war prohibition went into effect, was our "drink budget" of twenty hundred millions of dollars, and three-fourths of this immense sum came from the pockets of the poor. The labourer who spent half a dollar a day on liquor was—from the standpoint of family duty and responsibility—quite as guilty as the idle rich. For that matter, so now is the twelve hundred dollar clerk who spends three or four per cent. of his income on cigarettes and tobacco.

Nor must it be forgotten that there is luxury *and* luxury; that is, luxury which is plain self-indulgence and other luxury which is social rather than selfish and helps to make life cheery and attractive; luxury that is merely open-handed liberality and the opposite of meanness; luxury that is not so much luxury as reasonable comfort, and comfort the cost of which means the sharing of wealth with others; the sort of "high" living which is high only in the sense of rich appreciation of fine things; luxury which has its charter in the well-balanced saying of St. Paul when he speaks of the God "who giveth us richly of all things to enjoy." There is nothing in the Christian religion which commands us to steel our hearts against all the attractions of life, or cease to desire any of its good things or to find satisfaction in its social pleasures. It is the religion of the Christ who wrought His first miracle at a marriage feast, turned a social meal into a sacrament, had a friendly interest in all of life and was a welcome guest in the homes of the rich as well as the poor.

No: there is nothing in Christianity that calls for morbid discipline and uselessly severe self-denial; it is quite possible to prac-

tice its precepts in a palace. The trouble is that, while the Christian spirit may survive in a life of ease, there is a terrible probability that it will not. Riches cause what Stevenson calls "fatty degeneration of the moral nature." Luxury usually means softness. Money easily earned and as easily spent makes for too easy standards in all things. Jesus Christ knew the human heart and in spite of our ingenious efforts to explain away the saying He really meant something when He said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. A generation which runs an automobile on borrowed money will not find motor cars superior to camels in carrying us through tight places. Heaven becomes a dim and distant sphere to those who indulge their own undisciplined desires at the expense of their moral and charitable obligations.

We are thinking of self-indulgence and love of ease and not merely of luxury of living. Will you, therefore, let me point to a few things which, at first thought, you might not consider as a part of our subject, though they really are.

Take the family life as it is threatened by

the increasing frequency of divorce. How many ruined families result from the self-indulgence of a luxury-loving age! A generation not used to hardness of any sort is bound to lack the moral sturdiness which alone can make a happy family life possible. Happy marriages do not spring into being by magic. They are made—made by slow steps and with much patient effort. The silly sentimentality of the "best sellers" supposes that a man and woman, passionately in love and therefore ideally suited to each other, cannot but make marriage all bliss and sunshine. The assumption, practically, amounts to this, that a passionate emotional attachment will so overcome the innate selfishness of two individuals as to make them at once considerate and forbearing; that there is some natural law through which a willful, pleasure-loving young woman and an equally selfish young man will, simply because of their fascination for each other, immediately exhibit all the virtues necessary for the accommodation of differences of taste and clashing interests and desires, in a word, of selfishness set against selfishness. Two people marry with this fixed assumption; each is unwilling to make sacrifices; both want their own

way; both love luxury; neither will practice self-denial, and soon the divorce court is asked to give relief.

To touch lightly on another phase of modern life which we all handle with gloves, selfish indulgence and love of ease are not only ruining the home; they are depopulating it. In an age that shrinks from pain and dreads inconvenience, it is not surprising to read of a lowering birth rate whose figures each year grow smaller.

And the families of the poor—and with them families are still found—what will they be in the future, with children encouraged in self-will and indulgence; mothers innumerable slaving over work in which the daughters give no help; fathers so anxious to have their boys "rise in the world" that there are a hundred incompetent clerks applying for every vacancy, while the manual trades are held more and more in contempt? What may we expect in the coming generation but unhealthy social standards, little respect for discipline and duty and a cowardly shrinking from the inevitable pains and difficulties of life?

Do not think me pessimistic. I am drawing my lines with a strong hand, because I know that however dark the prospect may

seem, we have in the new appreciation of Christian principles which is slowly manifesting itself as the chief characteristic of modern religious teaching, an antidote for every social ill. What, then, has the religion of Jesus Christ to give as its message for this luxury-loving age?

(1) First, it reminds us that Christ's gospel is a gospel of work. The teaching of Christ is exemplified in His life. With all the world to choose from, how striking that He should identify Himself with plain people and take His place at a carpenter's bench! Labour must be the law of life if we are to be followers of such a Master. No life can be innocent that is spent in idleness. Not to be obliged to work is far from a blessing.

They who tread the path of labour follow
where Christ's feet have trod;
They who work without complaining do the
holy will of God.
Where the weary toil together, there am I
among my own.
Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am
I with him alone.
This is the gospel of labour—ring it, ye bells
of the kirk—
The God of love came down from above to
live with the men who work.

Thank God there is increasing evidence that this call of the Gospel has been heard. There have been conspicuous examples of its spirit during the war. Amid all the luxury of to-day, the captains of industry and the kings of commerce are still men who work for work's sake; who care for power and influence more than for money; who use their power increasingly for the public good; who, though they wish to retire to peaceful and contented ease, find that they cannot because they owe it to others not to relinquish their place. God grant that this spirit of service may win its way among men and women of leisure, telling them that their very exemption from care is a quickened call to service and that only in such service shall their luxury be other than immoral and debasing. Those who are not obliged to work for themselves are of moral necessity obliged to work for others. This was the lesson many of us learned during the war. May we never forget it.

(2) Again: the Christian message to a luxury-loving age is a call to simplicity of living. It reminds us that "a man's life consisteth not in the things which he possesseth." That does not, as I have already

reminded you, imply meanness of living. What it does mean is that we must be on our guard against living in the senses. Such softness and ease passes easily into something worse. Plain living makes high thinking, but it is just as true that high living makes poor thinking! Too great ease, too lazy a luxury, makes the life poor, weak and flabby, benumbs the intellect, deadens the spirit. We pass then from "the life of the senses" to the "sensual life."

The only way of escape from such a down-grade moral life is a life of rule and discipline. Indeed, the secret of the really effective lives of our generation lies in the fact that men have learned such discipline, physical, mental and moral. Most of the people who are making history or right opinion in these days are men and women who live by rule; indeed, live like railroad men, by schedule time, doing definite work at determined moments. Any real efficiency demands just such disciplined method.

The call of Christianity to the age is, therefore, a call to simplicity of living; but it is more than that, it is a call to disciplined living—to the life of the mind and the spirit, not the lower life of the senses; to the life of

regulated effort, not the haphazard life of momentary desire; to such a sense of vocation as may shame out of us all inordinate love of ease, because it is a betrayal of trust, a refusal to use our talents for *His* sake who gave them and *their* sakes for whose benefit they were given.

That is a wonderful word of Jesus Christ —the sixth word from the cross—"It is finished." It means that Christ could look back over all His life and know that every moment had been used, every opportunity met and every duty fulfilled—not one thing overlooked or forgotten, from the opening day's work of His boy life on to evening when He swept up the shavings in the carpenter's shop for the last time and closed the door and started out upon His ministry; again, from that day, on through all the years when His meat and drink was to do the Father's will and the zeal of the Lord's house consumed Him, to the moment when He knew that every prophecy had been fulfilled and every labour ended and bowed His head and gave up the ghost. The word means that for Jesus Christ life was a vocation and a disciplined service. We cannot possibly imagine that He could make anything else of it. Never, for Him, could it

have been the unregulated following of undisciplined desire.

On every side in the social life of the city are tragic examples of the violation of this fundamental law of Christianity—men and women of great natural gifts whose softness of life has sapped their moral and spiritual vitality. They have forgotten that they whose hands need not toil must keep their minds at labour. Even though not endowed with extraordinary mental gifts, at least they have leisure for the full cultivation of all the gifts that are theirs. They owe it to the world to show the strength and beauty of true culture.

(3) Owe it to the world! That reminds us, next, that ours is a gospel of human brotherhood. Not that Christianity first gave the idea of brotherhood to the world—we all know it did not—but it set the idea to work. It was a truth that had been lying dormant and Christianity aroused it into activity. The call to people of privilege is a call to brotherly service. Ah! how forgetful we had been of that fact. We have been appalled at the toll of lives which the war has exacted; yet all the while we sat in selfish ease and took no count of the lives which were sacrificed in times of peace,

through ignorance, drudgery, poverty and disease. They were our brothers and sisters; yet we did not feel their heartache. The question of Cain, asked in plausible excuse, was this: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Men have excused themselves in much the same way and with much the same phrase ever since Cain first asked the question. It is not a question the Christian can ask. His query must be not, "Am I my brother's keeper?" but, "Can I be my brother's brother?" Many a man or woman of wealth and leisure has found new birth, with possibilities of happiness hitherto undreamed of, in the effort to answer that question in the affirmative. The call to the privileged to-day is to break through their privilege and convince men of their sincerity by making sacrifices on a large scale and becoming chief agents in destroying all undue advantage by which they and their class can profit. That is the call of brotherhood. It is perhaps the last call men will hear, we have all shut our ears so tight against it. It is a call to unselfish sacrifice.

(4) And is not sacrifice of the very genius of Christianity? Christ's own sacrifice stands before us always, as a challenge and appeal. "Though He were rich, yet for our

sakes He became poor." There He stands, over against the wills and hearts of men, inviting them to walk the way of helpfulness as He did, at whatever cost.

I believe we of the Church have failed in the generation now passing, just because we have made religion easy, instead of heroic, and have not asked men to do hard things. The world, at heart, loves the heroic and will respond to its call. That was proved in the war, when the youth of every land rushed to the colours without conscription. It was proved here at home, when men of position gave themselves freely in the nation's service. It was proved when women refused to be content with such simple deeds of kindness as had always satisfied a thoughtless world before, but sought in every way to render sacrificial service. It is for us, now, to make the call of the Church so insistent that the same service shall be rendered in times of peace. That truly is the gospel of to-day.

(5) Finally, ours is the gospel of "the other world." To make life here a better and happier life becomes, indeed, a high call inspiring to high service, when the conviction is firm that life here is an entrance to life hereafter. Of course we can be keenly con-

scientious, splendidly unselfish and morally strong without the hope of heaven, just as a soldier can fight on when there is small hope of victory; but if we are to work, not with dogged persistence, but with zealous enthusiasm, we need the incentive of victory just beyond.

The summons to think of the other world is not a threatening call bidding us give up the pleasures of to-day lest we lose the joys of the great to-morrow. It does, indeed, remind us that the supreme and moving joys are those of the other life and it warns us against a manner of life here which can never grow into anything spiritual. Yes, it does give that warning, and very necessary it is in these days; but, most of all, it summons us to remember that high ideals and unselfish deeds are rightly demanded of us because what we build into our personality here lasts for all eternity. Here, as we live day by day, our deeds are forming habits and habits are forming character, and character—when it is fixed—is determined forever. That is why we must think of the other world as we face our duties in this. That is why the remembrance of the other world calls us "from refreshment to labour," from selfish ease to unselfish service. The

things for which men sell their souls are not lasting and so are of little worth. The character which the work of life was meant to form—that never dies. The solemn warning of the Gospel is just this: "Your life-work is not that of money-making or pleasure-seeking; it is character-forming. Remember, whatever you make of yourself, you have got to live with the self you make, forever."

Lord God, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, increase and multiply upon us Thy mercy, that, Thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord.

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